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BY

MARK RUTHERFORD

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To

Horace and Susan E. P. Smith

A Most

Inadequate Acknowledgement of

A Great Debt.

M. R.

860183

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A BAD DREAM

MISS TOLLER, a lady about forty years old, kept a boarding-house, called Russell House, at Brighton, in a dull but genteel part of the town—so dull that even those fortunate inhabitants who were reputed to have resources in themselves were relieved by a walk to the shops or by a German band. Miss Toller could not afford to be nearer the front. Rents were too high for her, even in the next street, which claimed a sea-view sideways through the bow-windows. She was the daughter of a farmer in Northamptonshire, and till she came to Brighton had lived at home. When she was five-and-twenty her mother died, and in two years her father married again. The second wife was a widow, good-looking but hard, and had a temper. She made herself very disagreeable to Miss Toller, and the husband took the wife's part. Miss Toller therefore left the farm at Barton Sluice, and with a little

money that belonged to her purchased the goodwill and furniture of Russell House. She brought with her a Northamptonshire girl as servant, and the two shared the work between them. At the time when this history begins she had five lodgers, all of whom had been with her six months, and one for more than a year.

Mrs. Poulter, the senior in residence of the five, was the widow of a retired paymaster in the Navy. She was between fifty and sixty, a big, portly woman. After her husband was pensioned she lived in Southsea. As he belonged to the civilian branch, Mrs. Poulter had to fight undauntedly in order to maintain a calling acquaintance with the wives of executive officers, and in fact the highest she had on her list was a commander's lady. When Paymaster Poulter died, and his pension ceased, she gave up the struggle. She had no children, and moved to Brighton with an annuity of £150 a year derived from her husband's insurance of £2000, and a life interest in some property left by her mother.

Mr. Goacher was a bachelor clergyman of about forty. He read prayers, presided over the book-club, and by a judicious expenditure of oil prevented friction be-

tween the other boarders. It was understood that he had been compelled to give up clerical duty by what is called clergyman's sore-throat. It was not known whether he had been vicar, rector, or curate, but he wore the usual white neck-band and a soft, low felt hat, he was clean-shaven, his letters were addressed 'Reverend,' he was not bad-looking; and these vouchers were considered sufficient.

Mrs. Mudge was the widow of a tradesman in London. She was better off than any of the other lodgers, and drank claret at twenty shillings a dozen.

Miss Everard, the youngest of the party, was a French mistress, but English by birth, and gave lessons in two or three schools. She was never at home on week-days excepting at breakfast and dinner. After dinner she generally corrected exercises in her bedroom, but when she was not busy she sat in the drawing-room to save fire and light.

Miss Taggart was the daughter of a country doctor. Both her parents were dead, and she was poor. She had a reputation for being enlightened, as she was not regular in her attendance at public worship on Sunday, and did not always go to the same church.

She told Mrs. Poulter once that science should tincture theology, whereupon, appeal being made to Mr. Goacher by that alarmed lady, he ventured to remark, that with all respect to Miss Taggart, such observations were perhaps liable to misconstruction in ordinary society, where they could not be fully explained, and, although she was doubtless right in a way, the statement needed qualification. Miss Taggart was not very friendly with Mrs. Poulter and Mr. Goacher, and despised Mrs. Mudge because she was low-bred. Miss Everard Miss Taggart dreaded, and accused her of being vicious and spiteful.

It was still early in December, but the lodgers in Russell House who had nothing to do—that is to say all of them excepting Miss Everard — were making plans for Christmas. They always thought a long time beforehand of what was going to happen. On Tuesday morning they began to anticipate Sunday, and when the Sunday afternoon wore away slowly and drearily, they looked forward to the excitement of omnibuses and butchers' carts on Monday. A little more than a fortnight before Christmas, on Sunday at early dinner, a leg of mutton was provided. Mrs. Poulter

always sat at the head of the table and carved. This was the position she occupied when Mr. Goacher came, and she did not offer to resign it. Mrs. Mudge was helped first, but it was towards the knuckle and she had no fat.

'Thank you, Mrs. Poulter, but will you please give me a piece of fat?'

Mrs. Poulter, scowling, placed a minute portion of hard, half-burnt skin on Mrs. Mudge's plate.

'Much obliged, Mrs. Poulter, but I want a piece of *fat*—white fat—just there,' pointing to it with her fork.

Mrs. Poulter, as we have said, was at enmity with Mrs. Mudge. Mrs. Mudge also was Low Church; and Mrs. Poulter was High. She had just returned from a High Church service at St. Paul's, and the demand for an undue share of fat was particularly irritating.

'Really, Mrs. Mudge, you forget that there is hardly enough to go round. For my part, though, I care nothing about it.'

'If I had thought you did, Mrs. Poulter, I am sure I should not have dared to ask for it.'

'I believe,' said Miss Taggart, 'that the office of fat in diet is to preserve heat.'

'If fat promotes heat,' said Miss Everard, 'and I have no doubt it is so, considering Miss Taggart's physiological knowledge, my advice is that we abstain from it.'

'It is a pity,' said Mr. Goacher, smiling, 'that animals will not suit our requirements. But to be practical, Miss Toller might be instructed to order legs of mutton with more fat. This reminds me of beef, and beef reminds me of Christmas. It is now the second Sunday in Advent, and there is a subject which you will remember we had agreed to discuss this week.'

This important subject was a proposal by Mrs. Mudge that Miss Toller should dine with them on Christmas Day.

'You, Mrs. Poulter,' said Mr. Goacher, 'are of opinion that we should not invite her?'

'Certainly. I do not see how she is to send up the dinner properly if she is to be our guest, and I imagine also she would not be comfortable with us.'

Mrs. M. 'Why shouldn't she be comfortable? Of course, if we don't try to make her so she won't be. There are ways to make people comfortable and ways to make them uncomfortable. Miss Toller is just as good as any of us.'

Miss T. 'She is not an educated woman, and I am sure she would rather remain downstairs; our conversation would not interest her.'

Miss E. 'Pray, Miss Taggart, what is an educated woman?'

Miss. T. 'What a question, Miss Everard! By an educated woman is meant a woman who has been taught the usual curriculum of a lady in cultivated circles.'

Miss E. 'What is the curriculum of a cultivated lady?'

Miss T. 'Really you are provoking; you understand perfectly as well as I do.'

Miss E. 'I am still in the dark. What is the curriculum of a cultivated lady?'

Mrs. P. 'I much doubt if Miss Toller is acquainted with the ordinary facts of geography, even those which are familiar to common seamen in the Navy. She probably could not tell us the situation of the Straits of Panama.'

Mrs. Poulter had been reading something in the newspaper the day before about the Panama Canal.

Miss E. 'Straits of Panama!' but she checked herself when she saw that not a muscle moved on anybody's face. 'Now, my dear Mrs. Poulter, I assure you I have

friends who dine in the best society, and I'll be bound they never heard of the Straits of Panama.'

Mrs. P. 'The society in which *I* was accustomed to mix, Miss Everard, would have excluded a person who was so grossly ignorant.'

Miss T. 'The possession of scientific truth, in addition to conferring social advantages, adds so much to our happiness.'

Miss E. 'This also I am inclined to dispute. Do you really feel happier, Mrs. Poulter, because you can tell us what continents are divided by the Straits of Panama?'

Mrs. M. 'I'll lay a wager Miss Toller knows as much as we do, but the things she knows aren't the things we know.'

Mr. G. 'We are digressing, I am afraid. I suggest we should have a ballot. I will write "Yes" on five little pieces of paper, and "No" on five, and after distribution we will fold them up, and each of us shall drop one in the vase on the mantelshelf.'

This was done, and there were three for the invitation and two against it.

Mrs. Poulter and Mr. Goacher were left alone after the table was cleared.

'Permit me to say, dear madam, that I entirely agreed with you.'

'You must have voted with Mrs. Mudge.'

'I did, but not from any sympathy with her views. I strive to keep the peace. In an establishment like this concord is necessary.'

Mr. Goacher, when he dropped his paper in the vase, had not forgotten that Mrs. Mudge had offered to provide the wine for the dinner. If she had been defeated the offer might have been withdrawn.

'I have fancied before now that I have seen in you a decided preference for Mrs. Mudge.'

This was true. He had 'tried it on with her,' to use her own words, but she was impregnable. 'It was no good with me,' she said to Miss Everard; 'I saw what he was after.'

'My dear Mrs. Poulter, your supposition is preposterous—forgive me—you do not suppose that I am unable to recognise superiority in birth, in manners, and in intellect. It was better, on this particular occasion, to conciliate Mrs. Mudge. She is not worthy of serious opposition. Miss Toller will not sit near you.'

Mrs. Poulter was pacified.

'I am glad to hear this explanation. I had hoped that one might be forthcoming.'

'I am truly thankful I am worthy of hope, *truly* thankful.'

Mrs. Poulter dropped Palmer's *Ecclesiastical History*, which she had begun to read every Sunday afternoon for three months. Mr. Goacher picked it up, and was about to take Mrs. Poulter's hand, but Miss Taggart entered and the conversation closed just when it was becoming interesting.

In a day or two Mrs. Poulter informed Miss Toller that the ladies and Mr. Goacher had been pleased to express a wish that she should dine with them on Christmas Day. She consented with becoming humility, as even Mrs. Poulter confessed, but with many secret misgivings. She desired to strengthen herself with her lodgers on whom her living depended, but Helen was more than a servant. She was her friend, and she could not bear the thought of leaving her in the kitchen. Helen, too, was passionate and jealous. Miss Toller therefore ventured to ask Mrs. Poulter whether, as it was Christmas, Helen also might be invited. Mrs. Poulter signified to Miss Toller her extreme surprise at the suggestion.

'The line, Miss Toller, must be drawn somewhere. Helen will have the gratuity usual at this season—she is a well-regulated person and will see the impropriety of intrusion into a sphere for which she is unfit.'

Miss Toller withdrew. She dared not venture to explain or apologise to Helen, although delay would make matters worse. She went into North Street and spent ten shillings which she could ill afford in buying a locket for her.

Christmas Eve was black and bitter. After the lodgers had gone to bed, Miss Toller and Helen sat by the kitchen fire.

'Oh, Miss, I wish we were at Barton Sluice.'

'What makes you wish it, now?'

'I hate this place and everybody in it, excepting you. I suppose it's Christmas makes me think of the old farm.'

'I remember you said once that you thought you would like a town.'

'Ah, I said so then. I should love to see them meadows again. The snow when it melts there doesn't go to dirty, filthy slush as it does in Brighton. But it's the people here I can't bear. I could fly at that Poulter

and that Goacher at times, no matter if I was had up for it.'

'You forget what a hard life you had with Mrs. Wootton at the Hatch.'

'No, I don't forget. She had a rough tongue, but she was one of our set. She got as good as she gave. She spoke her mind, and I spoke mine, and there was an end to it. But this lot—they are so stuck-up and stuck-round. I never saw such folk in our parts—they make me feel as if I were the dirt under their feet.'

'Never mind them. I have more to put up with than you have. You know all; you may be sure, if I could help it, I shouldn't be here.'

'I do know all. I shouldn't grieve if that stepmother of yours drank herself to death. O Lord, when I see what you have to go through I am ashamed of myself. But you were made one way and I another. You dear, patient creature!'

'It's half-past eleven. It is time to go to bed.'

They went to their cold lean-to garrets under the slates.

Miss Toller lay awake for hours. This, then, was Christmas Eve, one more Christmas Eve. She recollected another Christmas

Eve twenty years gone. She went out to a party, she and her father and mother and sister; mother and sister now dead. Somebody walked home with her that clear, frosty night. Strange! Miss Toller, Brighton lodging-house keeper, always in black gown —no speck of colour even on Sundays— whose life was spent before sinks and stoves, through whose barred kitchen windows the sun never shone, had wandered in the land of romance; in her heart also Juliet's flame had burned. A succession of vivid pictures of her girlhood passed before her: of the garden, of the farmyard and the cattle in it, of the river, of the pollard willows sloping over it, of Barton Sluice covered with snow —how still it was at that moment—the dog has been brought inside because of the cold, and is asleep in the living-room—her father, is he awake? the tall clock is ticking by the window, she could hear its slow beats, and as she listened she fell asleep, but was presently awakened by the bells proclaiming the birth in a manger. She remembered that Mrs. Poulter had to be called at seven that she might go to an early service. She hastily put on her clothes and knocked at the door, but Mrs. Poulter decided that, as it was freezing, it

would not be safe to venture, and having ordered a cup of tea in her bedroom at half-past eight, turned round and fell asleep again.

It was a busy day. The lodgers, excepting Miss Everard, went to church in the morning, but Miss Toller and Helen had their hands full. In the afternoon Miss Toller was obliged to tell Helen the unpleasant news.

'I don't want to go, but I must not offend them.'

'But you *are* going?'

'I can't get out of it.'

Helen did not speak another word. About half-past six Miss Toller put on her best clothes and appeared in the dining-room. Helen punctually served the dinner. A seat was allotted to Miss Toller at the bottom of the table opposite Miss Everard and next to Mr. Goacher, who faced Mrs. Poulter. Mrs. Mudge's wine was produced, and Mr. Goacher graciously poured out a glass for Miss Toller.

'At this festive season, ma'am.'

A second glass was not offered, although Mrs. Mudge's supply was liberal. Mr. Goacher did not stint himself.

'There are beautiful churches in North-

amptonshire, I believe, Miss Toller?' said the reverend gentleman after the third glass.

'Yes, very beautiful.'

'Ah! that is delightful. To whatever school in the Establishment we belong, we cannot be insensible to the harmony between it and our dear old ivy-clad towers and the ancient gravestones. I love old country churches. I often wish my lot had been cast in a simple rural parish.'

Miss E. 'Why do you not go?'

Mr. G. 'My unfortunate throat; and besides, I believe I am really better fitted for an urban population.'

Miss E. 'In what way?'

Mr. G. 'Well, you see, Miss Everard, questions present themselves to our hearers in towns which do not naturally occur to the rustic mind—questions with which, if I may say so, I am perhaps fitted to deal. The rustic mind needs nothing more than a simple presentation of the Gospel.'

Miss E. 'What kind of questions?'

Mr. G. 'You must be aware that our friend Mrs. Poulter, for instance, accustomed as she is to the mental stimulus of Southsea and Brighton, takes an interest in topics unfamiliar to an honest agriculturist who is

immersed all the week in beeves and ploughs and swine.'

Mr. Goacher had intended that Mrs. Poulter should hear that her name was mentioned.

Mrs. P. 'What are you saying about me?'

Miss E. 'Nothing to your discredit. We were talking about town and country parishes, and Mr. Goacher maintains that in a town parish a clergyman of superior intellect is indispensable.'

Mrs. P. 'But what has that to do with me?'

Miss E. 'Oh, we merely brought you forward as an example. You have moved in cultured society, and he is of opinion that he is better fitted to preach to people like you than to farmers.'

Mrs. M. 'Culture, fiddle-de-dee! Afore I was married, I lived in the country. Five-and-twenty years I lived in it. Don't tell me. A farmer with five hundred acres of land, or even a cowman who has to keep a dozen cows in order and look after his own garden, wants more brains than any of your fine town-folk. Ah, and our old parson had a good bit more than any one of these half-witted curates such as you see here in

Brighton playing their popish antics in coloured clothes.'

Mrs. Poulter was very angry.

'Mrs. Mudge,' she said, speaking to nobody in particular, and looking straight before her, 'has chosen to-day of all days on which to insult, I will not call it *my* faith, but the faith of the Catholic Church.'

Mr. Goacher at once intervened with his oil-can.

'My leanings, Mrs. Poulter, have latterly at any rate been in your direction—without excesses, of course: but both you and I admit that the Church is ample enough to embrace the other great parties so long as there is agreement in essentials. Unity, unity! Mrs. Mudge's ardour, we must confess, proves her sincerity.'

Mr. Goacher took another glass of Mrs. Mudge's wine. After the dessert of almonds and raisins, figs, apples, and oranges—also supplied by Mrs. Mudge—Miss Toller rose and said she hoped she might be excused, but Mr. Goacher pressed her to stay. He had offered to entertain the company with a trifling humorous composition of his own. She consented, and he recited a parody on 'To be or not to be,' descriptive of a young lady's perplexity at having re-

ceived an offer of marriage. When it was over Miss Toller departed. It was now nine o'clock, and she found that the dinner things had been washed up, and that Helen had gone to bed. The next morning she went downstairs a little later than usual, but there was no Helen. She ran up to her bedroom. It was empty; she had slept there that night, but her box was packed and directed, and there was a paper on it to say that the carrier would call for it. Miss Toller was confounded. She would have rushed to the station, but the first train had gone. She was roused by the milkman at the area door, and hastened down to light the fire. At first she resolved to excuse Helen's absence on the ground that it was Boxing Day, but she would almost certainly not return, and after breakfast Miss Toller went upstairs and told her lodgers that Helen had left. Mrs. Poulter managed to acquaint Mr. Goacher and Miss Taggart that she desired to speak to them when Mrs. Mudge and Miss Everard were out of the way, and at midday there was a conference. Mrs. Poulter declared that the time had now arrived for decisive action, so far as she was concerned. Mrs. Mudge's behaviour could not be endured. Her in-

solence in the matter of the newspaper (this will be explained in a moment), and her contempt for what was sacred, made it impossible without loss of self-respect to live with her. The servant's sudden departure for reasons unknown, had, to use Mrs. Poulter's words, 'put the coping-stone to the edifice.' The newspaper grievance was this. The *Morning Post* was provided by Miss Toller for her boarders. Mrs. Poulter was always the first to take it, and her claim as senior resident was not challenged. One morning, however, Mrs. Mudge, after fidgeting for a whole hour, while Mrs. Poulter leisurely scanned every paragraph from the top of the first page down to the bottom of the last, suggested that the paper should be divided, as other people might wish to see it. Mrs. Poulter dropped her eye-glass and handed Mrs. Mudge the outside sheet, with the remark that if she would but have intimated politely that she was in a hurry, she could have had it before.

'I'm in no hurry,' Mrs. Mudge replied, 'and you don't seem to be in any. Thank you; this is not the bit I want; you needn't trouble; I can order a paper myself.' The next day there was a *Standard* for Mrs.

Mudge, who with some malice immediately offered it to Mr. Goacher. Mrs. Poulter glared at him, and after a little hesitation he expressed his obligation but preferred to wait, as he had a letter to write which must be dispatched immediately. Mrs. Poulter never forgot Mrs. Mudge's spite, as she called it; the *Standard* reminded her of it daily.

Mr. Goacher agreed with Mrs. Poulter that, for the reasons she gave, it would be desirable to remove from Russell House. He also felt that, as a clergyman, he would do wisely in leaving, for he could not ascribe the disappearance of 'the domestic' to anything but a consciousness of guilt.

Miss Taggart considered that Mrs. Mudge's conduct was due to defective training. As to Helen, Miss Taggart added that 'you never feel yourself secure against moral delinquency in the classes from which servants are drawn. They have no basis.'

'I understand,' said Mrs. Poulter, 'that Helen is a Dissenter.'

Miss Taggart, as the reader has been told, was not particularly fond of Mrs. Poulter and Mr. Goacher, but to stay with Mrs. Mudge and Miss Everard was impossible. She had also once or twice received a hint

from Miss Toller that perhaps she had better suit herself elsewhere, as the minute attention she demanded to her little needs, of which there were many, was trying both to mistress and servant.

Miss Toller was promptly informed that three of her lodgers were going at the end of the month.

'I hope, Mrs. Poulter, that you are not dissatisfied. I have no doubt I shall soon be able to obtain assistance.'

Mrs. P. 'Our reasons, Miss Toller, had better not be communicated ; they are sufficient. Against you personally we have nothing to object.'

Miss T. 'Have you searched the box which I understand has been left?'

Miss Toller. 'Have you missed anything, ma'am?'

Miss T. 'Not at present. I might discover my loss when it was too late.'

Mr. G. 'It would be better for the protection of all of us.'

Miss Toller. 'I couldn't do it for worlds ; you'll pardon me for saying so. I'd sooner you left me without paying me a farthing. Helen may have her faults, but she is as honest as——.' Miss Toller's voice trembled and she could not finish the sentence.

Mrs. P. 'Have you any reason to suspect any—any improper relationship?'

Miss Toller. 'I do not quite understand you.'

Mr. G. 'Pardon me, Mrs. Poulter, it is my duty to relieve you of that inquiry. Mrs. Poulter cannot be explicit. Do you surmise that Helen is compelled to conceal?—you will comprehend me, I am sure. I need not add anything more.'

The poor landlady, habitually crushed by the anticipation of quarter-day into fear of contradiction or offence, flamed up with sudden passion. 'Sir,' she cried, 'Helen is my friend, my dearest friend. How dare you!—you a clergyman! I let you and Mrs. Poulter know that she is as pure and good as you are—yes, and a thousand times better than you are with your hateful insinuations. I shall be thankful to see the last of you!' and she flung herself out of the room.

'What do you think of that?' said Mrs. Poulter. 'It is beyond comment. We cannot remain another night.' Mr. Goacher and Miss Taggart agreed, and Miss Taggart was commissioned at once to engage rooms. When she had gone Mr. Goacher was compelled to explain that he was in a difficulty.

'Of course, my dear Mrs. Poulter, after this open insult I must go at once, but unhappily I am rather behind-hand in my payments to Miss Toller. Remittances I expected have been delayed.'

'How much do you owe her?'

'I believe it is now about fifteen pounds. Her disgraceful conduct discharges us from any liability beyond to-day. Might I beg the loan of twenty pounds from you?—say for a fortnight. It is a favour I could not dream of soliciting from anybody but Mrs. Poulter.'

It was most inconvenient to Mrs. Poulter to advance twenty pounds at that moment. But she had her own reasons for not wishing that Mr. Goacher should imagine she was straitened.

'I believe I can assist you.'

Mr. Goacher dropped on his knees and took the lady's hand, kissing it fervently.

'My dear madam, may I take this opportunity, in this position, of declaring what must be obvious to you, that my heart—yes, my heart—has been captured and is yours? Identity of views on almost every subject, social and religious, personal attachment beyond that felt to any other woman I ever beheld—have we not sufficient reasons, if you

can but respond to my emotion, to warrant an Eden for us in the future?'

'Mr. Goacher, you take me by surprise. I cannot conceal my regard for you, but you will not expect an answer upon a matter of such moment until I have given it most mature consideration. Miss Taggart will be here directly: I think I hear the bell.'

Mr. Goacher slowly rose: Miss Taggart appeared and announced that the rooms were secured.

To end this part of the story, it may be added that in about a fortnight Mr. Goacher's throat was quite well, and he announced to Mrs. Poulter his intention of resuming active work in the Church. The marriage, therefore, was no longer delayed.

A little while afterwards Mrs. Goacher discovered that her husband had been a missionary in the service of the Church Missionary Society and had consequently been Low, that he had been returned a little damaged in character; and that resumption of active work was undesirable.

Mrs. Mudge had lunch and tea with a friend. When she came back Miss Toller told her what had happened.

'I dare say you'll blame me. It was

wrong to let my temper get the better of me, but I could not help it.'

'Help it? The wonder to me is you've stood it so long. *I* couldn't stand them; I should have left if they hadn't. Have they paid you?'

'Yes.'

'What, that Goacher? Then he borrowed it!' and Mrs. Mudge laughed till she cried.

The day wore on and no carrier came for the box. After dinner Miss Toller told Mrs. Mudge she must go out for a few minutes to get a charwoman; that she would take the latch-key, and that nobody would call. She had gone about a quarter of an hour when there was a ring at the bell. Mrs. Mudge went to the door and, behold, there was Helen!

'The Lord have mercy on us! Why did you run away so suddenly?'

'Don't ask me. Never you say a word about it to me. I'm a sinner: where's Miss Toller?'

Helen listened in silence as Mrs. Mudge told her the eventful history of the last twelve hours. She went upstairs: Miss Toller's bedroom door was open, and on the drawers she saw a little packet tied up with blue silk.

It was addressed 'for dear Helen.' She tore it open, and there was a locket and in it was her beloved mistress's hair—the mistress to whom she had been so cruel, who had so nobly defended her. She threw herself on the bed and her heart almost broke. Suddenly she leaped up, flew down into the kitchen, and began washing up the plates and dishes. Miss Toller was away for nearly an hour; her search for a char-woman was unsuccessful, and she came back dejected. Helen rushed to meet her and they embraced one another.

'O Miss Toller, forgive me! When I saw you sitting with that Poulter and that Goacher, the Devil got the better of me, but——'

'Hush, my dear; I oughtn't to have gone, and never any more from this day call me Miss Toller. Call me Mary, always from this day—you promise me?' and Miss Toller kissed Helen's quivering lips.

Miss Toller did all she could to get other boarders, but none came and she had a hard time. It was difficult for her sometimes to find a dinner for herself and Helen. Good Mrs. Mudge was delicately considerate and often said, 'that meat need not come up again,' and purposely ordered more than

she and Miss Everard could eat, but the butcher's bill and the milk bill were not paid so regularly as heretofore. Worse than privation, worse than debt, was the vain watching for inquiries and answers to her advertisement. What would become of her? Where could she go? Three more boarders she must have or she could not live, and there was no prospect of one. If by great good luck she could obtain three, they might not stay and the dismal struggle would begin again. Lodging-house keepers are not the heroines of novels and poems, but if endurance, wrestling with adversity, hoping in despair, be virtues, the eternal scales will drop in favour of many underground basements against battlefields. At last, after one or two pressing notices from landlord and rate-collector, Mrs. Mudge and Miss Everard were informed that Russell House was to be given up. She and Helen must seek situations as servants.

Mrs. Mudge and Miss Everard went away at the end of the month. On the dining-room table after they had gone Miss Toller found two envelopes directed to her. Inside were some receipts. Mrs. Mudge had paid all the rent due to the end of Miss Toller's term, and Miss Everard the

taxes. Next week Miss Toller had the following letter from her father:—

'My dear Mary,—This is to tell you that your stepmother departed this life last Tuesday fortnight. She was taken with a fit on the Sunday. On Tuesday morning she came to herself and wished us to send for the parson. He was here in an hour and she made her peace with God. I did not ask you to the funeral as you had been so long away. My dear Mary, I cannot live alone at my age. I was sixty-five last Michaelmas, and I want you back in the old house. Let bygones be bygones. I shall always be, your affectionate father,

'Thomas Toller.

'*P.S.*—You can have the same bedroom you had when your own mother was alive.'

The furniture, modern stuff, was sold, every stick of it, and Miss Toller rejoiced when the spring sofa and chairs which had been devoted to Poulters and Goachers and Taggarts were piled up in the vans. The nightmares of fifteen years hid themselves in the mats and carpets.

Helen and she standing at the dresser ate their last meal in the dingy kitchen of

Russell House. It was nothing but sandwiches, but it was the most delicious food they had tasted there. It is a mistake if you are old to go back to the village in which you were born and bred. Ghosts meet you in every lane and look out from the windows. There are new names on the signboard of the inn and over the grocer's shop. A steam-engine has been put in the mill, and the pathway behind to the mill dam and to the river bank has been closed The people you see think you are a visitor. The church is restored, and there is a brand new Wesleyan chapel. Better stay where you are and amuse yourself by trying to make flowers grow in your little, smoky, suburban back-garden. But Miss Toller and Helen were not too old. Mr. Toller met them at the station with a four-wheeled chaise. Before the train had quite stopped, Helen caught sight of somebody standing by the cart which was brought for the luggage. 'It's Tom! it's Tom!' she screamed; and it was Tom himself, white-headed now and a little bent. She insisted on walking with him by the side of his horse the whole four miles to their journey's end. He was between forty and fifty when she went away and had been with Mr. Toller ever since—

'tried a bit at times,' he confessed, 'with the second missus.' 'She's with God, let us hope,' said Tom, 'and we'll leave her alone.'

They came to Barton Sluice. Flat and unadorned are the fields there, and the Nen is slow, but it was their own land, they loved it, and they were at rest. They fell into their former habits, and the talk of crops, of markets, of the weather, and of their neighbours was sweet. Mrs. Mudge and Miss Everard came now and then to see them in summer time, and when Mr. Toller slept with his fathers, his daughter and Helen remained at the farm and managed it between them.

ESTHER

BLACKDEEP FEN, *24th November* 1838.

MY DEAR ESTHER,—This is your birthday and your wedding-day, and I have sent you a cake and a knitted cross-over, both of which I have made myself. I can still knit, although my eyes fail a bit. I hope the cross-over will be useful during the winter. Tell me, my dear, how you are. Twenty-eight years ago it is since you came into the world. It was a dark day with a cold drizzling rain, but at eleven o'clock at night you were born, and the next morning was bright with beautiful sunshine. Some people think that Blackdeep must always be dreary at this time of year, but they are wrong. I love the Fen country. It is my own country. This house, as you know, has belonged to your father's forefathers for two hundred years or more, and my father's old house has been in our family nearly as long. I could not live in London; but I ought not to talk in this way, for I hold it to be wrong to set anybody against what he

has to do. Your brother Jim is the best of sons. He sits with me in the evening and reads the paper to me. He goes over to Ely market every week. He has his dinner at the ordinary, where many of the company drink more than is good for them, but never once has he come home the worse for liquor. I had a rare fright a little while ago. I thought there was something between him and one of those Stanton girls at Ely. I saw she was trying to catch him. It is all off now. She is a town girl, stuck-up, spends a lot of money on her clothes, and would have been no wife for Jim. She would not have been able to put her hand to anything here. She might have broken my heart, for she would have tried to draw Jim away from me. I don't believe, my dearest child, in wedded love which lessens the love for father and mother. When you were going to be married what agony I went through! It was so wicked of me, for it was jealousy with no cause. I thank God you love me as much as ever. I wish I could see you again at Homerton, but the journey made me so ill last winter that I dare not venture just yet.—Your loving mother,

RACHEL SUTTON.

HOMERTON, 27*th Nov.* 1838.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—The cake was delicious: it tasted of Blackdeep, and the cross-over will be most useful. It will keep me warm on cold days, and the love that came with it will thicken the wool. But, mother, it is not a month ago since you sent me the stockings. You are always at work for me. You are just like father. He gave us things not only on birthdays, but when we never looked out for them. Do you remember that week when wheat dropped three shillings a quarter? He had two hundred quarters which he might have sold ten days earlier. He was obliged to sell them at the next market and lost thirty pounds, but he had seen at Ely that day a little desk, and he knew I wanted a desk, and he bought it for me with a fishing-rod and landing-net for Jim.

My husband said he could not think of anything I needed and wrote me a cheque for two pounds.

O! that you could come here, and yet I am certain you must not. My heart aches to have you. In my day-dreams I go over the long miles to Blackdeep, through Ware, through Royston, through Cambridge,

through every village, and then I feel how far away you are. I turned out of the room the other day the chair in which you always sat. I could not bear to see it empty. Charles noticed it had gone and ordered it to be brought back. He may have suspected the reason why I put it upstairs. My dearest, dearest mother, never fear that my affection for you can become less. Sometimes after marriage a woman loves her mother more than she ever loved her before.

It is a black fog here and not a breath of air is stirring. How different are our fogs at Blackdeep! They may be thick, but they are white and do not make us miserable. I never shall forget when I was last in Fortyacres and saw the mist lying near the river, and the church spire bright in the sunlight. The churchyard and the lower part of the church were quite hidden.

What a mercy Jim was not trapped by Dolly, for I suppose it was she. Jim is not the first she has tried to get. You are quite right. She might have broken your heart, and I am sure she would have broken Jim's, for she is as hard as a millstone.—Your loving child,

ESTHER.

BLACKDEEP FEN, *3rd December* 1838.

Your letter made me feel unhappy. I am afraid something is on your mind. What is the matter? I was not well before I went to Homerton the last time, but maybe it was not London that upset me. If you cannot leave, I shall come. Let me hear by the next post.

HOMERTON, *5th December* 1838.

I told Charles I was expecting you. He said that your sudden determination seemed odd. 'Your mother,' he added, 'is a woman who acts upon impulses. She ought always to take time for consideration. This is hardly the proper season for travelling.' I asked him if he would let me go to Blackdeep. He replied that, unless there was some particular reason for it, my proposal was as unwise as yours. What am I to do? A particular reason! It is a particular reason that I pine for my mother. Can there be any reason more particular than a longing for the sight of a dear face, for kisses and embraces? You must counsel me.

BLACKDEEP, *15th December* 1838.

As Charles imagines I am carried away by what he calls impulses, I did not answer

your letter at once, and I have been thinking as much as I can. I am not a good hand at it. Your dear father had a joke against me. 'Rachel, you can't think; but never mind, you can do much better without thinking than other people can with it.' I wish I had gone straight to you at once, and yet it was better I did not. It would have put Charles out, and this would not have been pleasant for either you or me. I would not have you at Blackdeep now for worlds. The low fever has broken out, and to day there were two funerals. Parson preached a sermon about it; it was a judgment from God. Perhaps it is, but why did it take your father three years ago? It is all a mystery, and it looks to me sometimes as if here on earth there were nothing but mystery. I have just heard that parson is down with the fever himself.

Do let me have a long letter at once.

HOMERTON, 20*th December* 1838. .

A Mrs. Perkins has been here. She sat with me for an hour. She spends her afternoons in going her rounds among her friends, as she calls them, but she does not care for them, nor do they care for her. She looks

and speaks like a woman who could not care for anybody, and yet perhaps there may be somewhere a person who could move her.

I am so weary of the talk of my neighbours. It is so different from what we used to have at Blackdeep. Oh me! those evenings when father came in at dark, and Mr. and Mrs. Thornley came afterwards and we had supper at eight, and father and Mr. Thornley smoked their pipes and drank our home-brewed ale and we had all the news —how much Mr. Thornley had got for his malt, how that pig-headed old Stubbs wouldn't sell his corn, and how when he began to thresh it and the ferrets were brought, a hundred rats were killed and bushels of wheat had been eaten.

You ask me what is the matter. I do not deny I am not quite happy, but it would be worse than useless to dwell upon my unhappiness and try to give you reasons for it. London, in the winter, most likely does not suit me. I shall certainly see you in the spring, and then I hope I shall be better.

BLACKDEEP FEN, *Christmas Day*, 1838.

As a rule it is right to hide our troubles, but it is not right that you should hide yours

from me. You are my firstborn child and my only daughter. There are girls who are very good, but between their mothers and them there is a wall. They do what they are bid ; they are kind, but that is all. They live apart from those that bore them. I would not give a straw for such duty and love. I gathered one of our Christmas roses this morning. We have taken great care to keep them from being splashed and spoilt. There was not a speck on it. I put it in water and could not take my eyes off it. Its white flower lay spread open and I could look right down into it. I thought of you. When you were a little one—ay, and after you were out of short frocks—you never feared to show me every thought in your mind, you always declared that if you had wished to hide anything from me, it would have been of no use to try. What a blessing that was to me! How dreadful it would be if, now that you are married, you were to change! I am sure you will not and cannot.

HOMERTON, *1st January* 1839.

The New Year! What will happen before the end of it? I feel as if it must be something strange. I have just read your

last letter again, and I cannot hold myself in. My dearest mother, I confess I am wretched. It might be supposed that misery like mine would express itself with no effort, but it is not so: it would be far easier to describe ordinary things. I am afraid also to talk about it, lest that which is dim and shapeless should become more real.

Since the day we were married Charles and I have never openly quarrelled. He is really good: he spends his evenings at home and does not seem to desire entertainment elsewhere. He likes to see me well-dressed and does not stint in house expenditure, although he examines it carefully and pays a good many of the bills himself by cheque. He has been promoted to be manager of the bank, and takes up his new duties to-day. Mrs. Perkins, whose husband is one of the partners, told me that he had said that there is nobody in the bank equal to Charles for sound sense and business ability; that everything with which he has to do goes right; he is always calm, never in a hurry, and never betrayed into imprudence. This I can well believe. As you know, Jim asked him a month ago in much excitement for advice about Fordham, who owed him £200.

Jim had heard there was something wrong. Charles put the letter in the desk and did not mention it to me again till a week afterwards, when he asked me to tell Jim the next time I wrote to Blackdeep that he need not worry himself, as Fordham was quite safe. It is certainly a comfort to a woman that her husband is a strong man and that he is much respected by his employers. Of what have I to complain? O mother, life here is so dull! This is not the right word; it is common, but if you can fill it up with my meaning, there is no better. It will then be terrible. There is hardly a flower in the garden, although not a weed is permitted. The sooty laurels unchanging through winter and summer I hate. Some flowers I am sure would grow, but Charles does not care for them. Neatness is what he likes, and if the beds are raked quite smooth, if the grass is closely shaven and trimmed and not a grain of gravel in the path is loose, he is content. He cannot endure the least untidiness in the house. If papers are left lying loosely about, he silently puts them evenly together. He brings all his office ways into the dining-room; the pens must never be put aside unwiped and the ink-bottles must be kept filled to a

certain height. We do not get much sun at any time of day in Homerton, and we face the west. Charles wishes the blinds to be drawn when it shines, so that it may not fade the curtains. We have few books excepting Rees's cyclopædia, and they are kept in a glazed case. If I look at one I have to put it back directly I have done with it. I saw this place before I was married, but it did not look then as it looks now, and I did not comprehend how much Blackdeep was a part of me. The front door always open in daytime, the hollyhocks down to the gate, the strawberry beds, the currant and gooseberry bushes, the lilacs, roses, the ragged orchard at the back, the going in and out without 'getting ready,' our living-room with Jim's pipes and tobacco on the mantel-shelf, his gun over it, his fishing-tackle in the corner—I little understood that such things and the ease which is felt when our surroundings grow to us make a good part of the joy of life. When I came to Blackdeep for my holiday and lifted the latch, it was just as if a stiff, tight band round my chest dropped from me. I have nothing to do here. We keep three servants indoors. I would much rather have but two and help a little

myself. They are good servants, and the work seems to go by mechanism without my interference. I suggested to Charles that, as they were not fully employed, we should get rid of one, but he would not consent. He preferred, he said, paid service. To me the dusting of my room, paring apples, or the cooking of any little delicacy, is not service. The cook asks for orders in the morning; the various dishes are properly prepared; but if I were Charles, and my wife understood her business, I should like to taste her hand in them. I never venture into the kitchen. 'The advantage of paid service,' added Charles, 'is that if it is inefficient you can reprimand or dismiss.' Nothing in me finds exercise. I want to work, to laugh, to expect. There was always something going on at Blackdeep, no two days alike. I never got up in the morning knowing what was before me till bedtime. That outlook too from my window, how I miss it!—the miles and miles of distance, the rainbow arch in summer complete to the ground, the sunlight, the stormy wind, the stars from the point overhead to the horizon far away—I hardly ever see them here.

You will exclaim 'Is this all?' If you

were here you would think it enough, but it—— The clock is striking one. Charles is to be at home to lunch. He is going to buy the house and is to meet the owner this afternoon, an old man who lives about ten minutes' walk from us. Charles thinks the purchase will be a good investment and that another house might be built on part of the garden.

BLACKDEEP, 15*th January* 1839.

I am not surprised you find London dull. but I grieve that it has taken such an effect on you. I hoped that, as you are young, you would get used to the bricks and mortar and the smoke.

Jim came in and I had to stop. The Lynn coach is set fast in the snow near the turnpike at the top of our lane, and he is going to help dig it out. I will take up my pen again. You are no worse off than thousands of country girls who are obliged to live in streets narrower than those in Homerton. I cannot help boding you are not quite free with me. I do beseech you to hide nothing. There must even now be something the matter beyond what I have heard. I cannot say any more at present. My head is in a whirl. May be you will

have a child. That will make all the difference to you.

HOMERTON, *20th January* 1839.

How shall I begin? I must tell the whole truth. Mother, mother, I have made a great mistake, the one great mistake of life. I have mistaken the man with whom I am to live. Charles and I were engaged for two years. I have discovered nothing new in him. I was familiar with all his ways and thought them all good. I compared him with other men who were extravagant and who had vices, and I considered myself fortunate. He was cool, but how much better it was to be so than to have a temper, for I should never hear angry words from him which cannot be forgotten? I remembered how measured my uncle Robert's speech was, how quiet he was, and yet no two human beings could have been more devoted to one another than uncle and aunt. Charles's quietude seemed so like uncle's. Charles was very methodical. He always came to see me on the same days, at the same hours, and stayed the same time. It provoked me at first, but I said to myself that he was not a creature of fits and starts and that I could always depend on him.

He always kissed me when we met and when we parted. I do not remember that he ever had me in his arms, and I never felt he was warm and eager when we were alone together; but I had heard of men and women who married for what they called love, and in a twelvemonth it had vanished and there was nothing left. Of many small particulars I took but little notice. When we chose the furniture I wanted bright-coloured curtains, but he did not like them and bought dark red, gloomy stuff. I tried to think they were the best because they would not show the London dirt. I had a bonnet with scarlet trimmings which suited my black hair, but he asked me to change them for something more sober, because they made me conspicuous. Again I thought he was right, and that what might do for the country might not be proper in town. Trifles! and yet to me now what a meaning they have! Two years—and everything is changed, although, as I have just said, I have found out nothing new! The quietude is absence of emotion, different in its root from uncle Robert's serenity. It is the deadly sameness of a soul to which nothing is strange and wonderful and a woman's heart is not so interesting as an advertise-

ment column in the newspaper. He never cares to look into mine. I do not pretend that there is anything remarkable in it, but if he were to open it he would find something worth having. This absence of curiosity to explore what is in me kills me. What must the bliss of a wife be when her husband searches her to her inmost depths, when she sees tender questions in his eyes, when he asks her *do you really feel so?* and she looks at him and replies *and you?* I could endure the uneventfulness of outward life if anything not unpleasant *happened* between me and Charles. Nothing happens. Something happens in my relationship to my dog. I pat him and he is pleased; he barks for joy when I go out. I cannot live with anybody with whom I am always on exactly the same even terms—no rising, no falling, mere stagnation. I am dead, but it is death without its sleep and peace. Fool, fool that I was! I cannot go on. What shall I do? If Charles drank I might cure or tolerate him; if he went after another woman I might win him back. I can lay hold of nothing.

A child? Ah no! I have longed unspeakably for a child sometimes, but not for one fathered by him.

BLACKDEEP, 24*th January* 1839.

I knew it all, but I dared not speak till you had spoken. Your letter came when we were at breakfast. I could not open it, for my heart told me what was in it. Jim wondered why I let it lie on the table, and I made some excuse. After breakfast I took it upstairs into my own room and sat down by the bed, your father's bed, and cried and prayed. If he were alive he would have helped me, or if no help could have been found he would have shared my sorrow. It is dreadful that, no matter what my distress may be, he cannot speak. What counsel can I send you? I have had much to do with affliction, but not such as yours. My love for you is of no use. I will be still. I have always found, when I am in great straits and my head is confused, I must hold my tongue and do nothing. If I do not move, a way may open out to me. Meantime, live in the thought of Blackdeep and of me. It will do you no harm and may keep you from sinking.

HOMERTON, 30*th January* 1839.

No complaint, no reproof. You might have told me it was perhaps my fault.

I always have to reflect on what I am about

to say to him. I go through my sentences to the end before I open my lips. He dislikes exaggeration, and checks me if I use a strong word; but surely life sometimes needs strong words, and those which are tame may be further from the truth than those which burn. When he first began to think about buying the house, I was surprised and talked with less restraint than is usual with me. After a little while he said that I had not contributed anything definite to a settlement of the question. I dare say I had not, but it is natural to me to speak even when I do not pretend to settle questions. He seems to think that speech is useless unless for a distinct, practical purpose. At Blackdeep almost everything that comes into my head finds its way to my tongue. The repression here is unbearable.

Last night it rained, and Charles's overcoat was a little wet at the bottom. He asked that it might be put to the fire. Directly he came down in the morning he felt his coat and at breakfast said in his slow way, 'My coat has not been dried.' I replied that I was very sorry, that I had quite forgotten it, and that it should be dried before he was ready to start. I jumped up, brought it into the room and hung it on a chair on the

hearth-rug. He did not thank me and appeared to take no notice. 'I am indeed very sorry,' I repeated. He then spoke. 'I do not care about the damp: it is the principle involved. I have observed that you do not endeavour systematically to impress my requests on your mind. If you were to take due note of them at the time they are made, and say them aloud two or three times to yourself, they would not escape your memory. Forgetfulness is never an excuse in business, and I do not see why it should be at home.' 'O Charles!' I cried, 'do not talk about principles in such a trifle; I simply forgot. I should be more likely to forget my cloak than your coat.' He did not answer me, but opened a couple of letters, finished his breakfast, and then began to write at the desk. I went upstairs, and when I returned to the breakfast room he had gone. In the evening he behaved as if nothing had passed between us. He would have thought it ridiculous if such a reproof had unsettled a clerk at the bank, and why should it unsettle me? The clerk expects to be taught his lesson daily. So does every rational being.

Nothing! nothing! I can imagine Mrs. Perkins' contempt if I were to confide in her.

'As good a husband as ever lived. What do you want, you silly creature? I suppose it's what they call passion. You should have married a poet. You have made an uncommonly good match and ought to be thankful.' A poet! I know nothing of poets, but I do know that if marriage for passion be folly, there is no true marriage without it.

BLACKDEEP, *7th February* 1839.

I am no clearer now than I was a fortnight ago. I wish I could talk to somebody, and then perhaps my thoughts would settle themselves. Last Sunday I made up my mind I would come to you at all costs; then I doubted, and this morning again I was going to start at once. Now my doubts have returned. Jim notices how worried I am, and I make excuses.

I cannot rest while I am not able to do more than put you off by praying you to bear your lot patiently. It is so hard to stand helpless and counsel patience. Could you give him up and live here? I am held back, though, from this at present. I am not sure what might happen if you were to leave him. Perhaps he would be able to force you to return. You have no charge to make

against him which anybody but myself would understand.

I must still wait for the light which I trust will be given me. It is wonderful how sometimes it strikes down on me suddenly and sometimes grows by degrees like the day over Ingleby Fen. I lay in bed late this morning, for I hadn't slept much, and watched it as it spread, and I thought of my Esther in London who never sees the sunrise.

HOMERTON, 14*th February* 1839.

There is hardly anything to record—no event, that is to say—and yet I have been swept on at a pace which frightens me. The least word or act urges me more than a blow. Yesterday I made up my accounts and was ten shillings short. I went over them again and again and could not get them right. I was going to put into the cash-box ten shillings of my own money, but I thought there might be some mistake and that Charles, who always examines my books, would find it out, and that it would be worse for me if he had discovered what I had done than if I had let them tell their own tale. After dinner he asked for them, counted my balance, and at once found out there was ten

shillings too little. I said I knew it and supposed I had forgotten to put down something I had spent. 'Forgotten again?' he replied; 'it is unsatisfactory: there is evident want of method.' He locked the box and book in the desk and read the newspaper while I sat and worked. Next day I remembered the servant had half-a-sovereign to pay the greengrocer, and I had not seen her since I gave it to her. When Charles returned from the bank my first words were, 'O Charles, I know all about the half-sovereign: I am so glad.' Would not you have acknowledged you were glad too? He looked at me just as he did the night before. I believe he would rather I had lost the money. 'Your explanation,' was his response, 'makes no difference: in fact it confirms my charge of lack of system. I have brought you some tablets which I wish you to keep in your pocket, and you must note in them every outgoing at the time it is made. These items are then to be regularly adjusted, and transferred afterwards.' I could not restrain myself.

'Charles, Charles,' I cried, 'do not *charge* me, as if I had committed a crime. For mercy's sake, soften! I have confessed I was careless; can you not forgive?' 'It is much

easier,' was the answer, 'to confess and regret than to amend. I am not offended, and as to forgiveness I do not quite comprehend the term. It is one I do not often use. What is done cannot be undone. If you will alter your present habit, forgiveness, whatever you may mean by it, becomes superfluous.' His lips shut into their usual rigidity. Not a muscle in them would have stirred if I had kissed them with tears. No tears rose; I was struck into hardness equal to his own, and with something added. I *hated* him. 'Henceforward,' I said to myself, 'I will not submit or apologise; there shall be war.'

16th February 1839.

I left my letter unfinished. War? How can I make war or continue at war? I could not keep up the struggle for a week. I am so framed that I must make peace with those with whom I have disagreed or I must fly. I would take nine steps out of the ten—nay, the whole ten which divide me from dear friends; I would say that this or that was not my meaning. I would abandon all arguing and wash away differences with sheer affection. Toward Charles I cannot stir. Sometimes, although but seldom, my brother Jim and I have quarrelled. Five

minutes afterwards we have been in one another's arms and the angry words were as though they had never been spoken. Forgiveness is not a remission of consequences on repentance. It is simply love, a love so strong that in its heat the offence vanishes. Without love—and so far Charles is right—forgiveness even of the smallest mistake is impossible.

It is a thick, dark fog again this morning. At Blackdeep most likely it is bright sunlight.

Charles does not seem to suspect that his indifference has any effect on me. I suppose he is unable to conceive my world or any world but his own. If he were at Blackdeep now and the sun were shining, would it be to him a glowing, blessed ball of fire?

He may have just as much right to complain of me as I have to complain of him. He sets store on the qualities necessary for his business, and he knows what store the partners set on those qualities in him. No doubt they are of great importance to everybody. It must be hard for him to live with a woman who takes so little interest in city affairs and makes so much of what to him is of no importance. He looks down upon me as though I were not able to talk

on any subject which, for its comprehension, requires intelligence. If he had married Miss Stagg, who has doubled the drapery business at Ely, they might have agreed together very well.

This is true, but I come back to myself. The virtues are not enough for me. Life with them alone is not worth the trouble of getting up in the morning. I thirst for you: I shall come, whatever may happen.

BLACKDEEP, 20*th February* 1839.

I cannot write an answer to your letter. You must come. I could not make up my mind last night, but this morning the light, the direction, as my mother used to say, was like a star. How you remind me of her! not in your lot but in your ways, and she had your black hair. She was a stranger to these parts. Where your grandfather first saw her I do not know, but she was from the hill country in the far south-west. She never would hear anything against our flats. When folk asked her if she did not miss the hills, she turned on them as if she had been born in the Fens and said she had found something in them better than hills. But how I do wander on! That has nothing to do with you now, although I could tell you,

if it were worth while, how it came into my head. I shall look out for you this week.

LOMBARD STREET, 14*th March* 1839.

DEAR ESTHER,—You have now been away three weeks and I shall be glad to hear when you intend to return. Your mother I hope is better, and if she is not, I trust you will see that your absence cannot be indefinitely prolonged. I am writing at the Bank, and your reply marked 'Private' should be addressed here. Some changes, now almost completed, are being made in the lower rooms at Homerton which will give me one for any business of my own.—Your affectionate husband,

CHARLES CRAGGS.

BLACKDEEP, 17*th March* 1839.

DEAR CHARLES,—My mother is not well, and I shall be grateful to you if you will give me another week. I am sorry you have made alterations in the house without saying anything to me. It will be better now that I should not come back till they are finished.—Your affectionate wife,

ESTHER CRAGGS.

HOMERTON, 19*th March* 1839.

The paperhangers and painters have left; the carpets will be laid and the furniture arranged to-day. I trust to see you when I come home on the 22nd instant. This will nearly give you the week you desired. I shall be late at the Bank on the 22nd, but if you are fatigued with your journey there is no reason why you should not retire to rest, and we will meet in the morning.

BLACKDEEP, 21*st March* 1839.

I had hoped for a little delay, for I shrank from the necessity of announcing my resolve, although it has for some time been fixed. I shall not return. The reason for my refusal shall be given with perfect sincerity. I do not love you, and you do not love me. I ought not to have married you, and I can but plead the blindness of youth, which for you is a poor excuse. I shall be punished for the remainder of my days, and not the least part of the punishment will be that I have done you a grievous injury. Worse, however—ten thousand times worse—would it be for both of us if we were to continue chained together in apathy or hatred. I would die

for you this moment to make good what you have lost through me, but to live with you as your wife would be a crime of which I dare not be guilty. This is all, and this is enough.

HOMERTON, 24*th March* 1839.

MADAM,—I am not surprised at the contents of your letter of the 21st instant, nor am I surprised that your determination should have been made known to me from your mother's house. I have no doubt that she has done her best to inflame you against me. How she contrives to reconcile with her religion her advice to her daughter to break a divine law, I will not inquire. I am not going to remonstrate with you; I will not humiliate myself by asking you to reconsider your resolution. I will, however, remind you of one or two facts, and point out to you the consequences of your action, so that hereafter you may be unable to plead you were not forewarned.

You will please bear in mind that *you* have abandoned *me*; I have not abandoned you. You disappointed me: my house was not managed in accordance with my wishes, but I was prepared to accept the consequences of what I did deliberately and I desired to

avoid open rupture. I hoped that in time you would learn by experience that the maxims which control my conduct rest on a solid basis; that I was at least to be esteemed, and that we might live together in harmony. I repeat, you have cast me off, though I was willing you should stay.

You confess you have done me a wrong, but have you reflected how great that wrong is? I have no legal grounds for divorce, and you therefore prevent me from marrying again. You have damaged my position in the Bank. Many of my colleagues, envious of my success, will naturally seize their opportunity and propagate false reports, and I therefore inform you that I shall require of you a document which my solicitor will prepare, completely exonerating me. This will be necessary for my protection. A Bank manager's reputation is extremely sensitive, and a notorious infringement of any article of the moral code would in many quarters cause his commercial honesty to be suspected.

You allege that you are sincere, but I can hardly acquit you of hypocrisy. Your sentimental excuse for deserting me is suspicious.

When the document just mentioned has been signed, I shall send a copy of it to the rector of your parish. Without it he will know nothing but what you and your mother tell him, and he will be in a false position.

I hereby caution you that I shall not lose sight of you, and if at any time proof of improper relationship should be obtained, I shall take advantage of it.

CHARLES CRAGGS.

BLACKDEEP, *26th March* 1839.

DEAREST MOTHER, — This letter came this morning, and I send it at once to you at Ely. Am I to answer it? When I read some parts I wished he had been near me that I might have caught him by the throat. I should have exulted that for once I could move him, although it should be by terror. It is strange that not until now did I know he was so brutal. Notice that, according to him, if a wife leaves her husband it must be for a rival. He does not understand how much she can hate him, body and soul, and with no thought of a lover; that her loathing needs no

other passion to inflame it, and that the touch of his clean finger may be worse to her than a leper's embrace.

When I had written so far I was afraid. I knelt down and cried to our Father who is in Heaven.—Your loving daughter,

ESTHER.

ELY, 28*th March* 1839.

You must not reply. I have always tried not to answer back if it will do no good. In a way, I am not sorry he has written in this style to you. It proves that the leading I had was true. I feared cruel claws ever since I first set eyes on him notwithstanding he was so even-tempered, and I am glad he has not shown them till you are safe in Blackdeep. I know what you will have to go through in time to come, but for all that I am sure I am right and that you are right. I am more sure than ever. I am sorry for him, but he will soon settle down and rejoice that you have gone. That spiteful word about my religion does not disturb me. I have my own religion. I have brought up my children in it. I have taught them to fear God and to love

the Lord Jesus Christ, who has stood by me in all my troubles and guided me in all my straits whenever I have been willing to wait His time. I bless God, my dear child, that you have not gone away from your mother's faith—ay, and your father's too—and that you can still pray to your Heavenly Father in your distress. Be thankful you have been spared the worst, that you have not grown hard.

I shall come back this week; your aunt wants you here, and a change will do you good.

BLACKDEEP, 10*th April* 1839.

I am glad you went to Ely, for yesterday the parson called to see you. He had received a letter from Mr. Craggs, and considered it his duty as a Christian minister to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation. I told him at once he might spare himself the pains, for they would be useless. He replied that I ought to think of the example. Well, at that I broke out. I asked him whether that slut of a Quimby girl wasn't a worse example, who at five-and-twenty had married Horrocks, the

hoary old wretch, for his money, and leads him a dog's life? Had he ever warned either of them? They go to church regular. I was very free, and I said I thought it was a bright example that a woman should have given up a fine house and money in London because there was no love with them, and should have come back to her mother at Blackdeep. Besides, I added, why should my Esther suffer a living death for years for the sake of the folk hereabouts? They weren't worth it. She was too precious for that. 'Oh!' but he went on again, 'they have souls to be saved. Husbands and wives may be led to imagine there is no harm in separating, and may yield to the temptations of unlawful love.' This made me very hot, and I gave it him back sharp that a sinner could find in the Bible itself an excuse for his sin.

He said no more except that it would be a nice scandal for the Dissenters, and that he trusted God would bring me into a better frame of mind. He then went away. His reasoning went in at one ear and out at the other. Parsons are bound to preach by rule. It is all general: it doesn't fit the ins and outs.

BLACKDEEP, 1*st May* 1839.

You had better stop at Ely as long as you can. Everybody is gossiping, for parson has told the story as he heard it from your husband. It is worse for Jim than for me, as he goes about among people here, and although they daren't say anything to him about you, there is no mistake as to what they think. Mrs. Horrocks inquired after me, and said she was sorry to hear of my trouble. Jim told her I was quite well, and that the two cows were now all right. He wouldn't let her see he knew what she meant.

Last night, Jim, who has been talking for a twelvemonth past about going to his cousin in America, asked me whether I would not be willing to leave. I have always set my face against it. To turn my back on the old house and the Fen, to begin again at my time of life in a new strange world would be the death of me. More than ever now am I determined to end my days here. They'd say at once we had fled. No, here we'll bide and face it out.

They did not fly. Years went on, and to the astonishment of their neighbours—

perhaps they were a little sorry—there was no sign that Esther had a lover. Mrs. Horrocks's eyes were feline, but she was obliged to admit she was at fault. Jim married, and an agreeable opportunity was presented for the expression of amazement that his wife's father and mother felt safe in allowing their child to enter such a family—but then she came from Norwich. The majority of the poor in Blackdeep Fen sided with the Suttons, and here and there a pagan farmer boldly declared that old Mrs. Sutton and her daughter were of a right good sort, and that there was not a straightforrarder man than Jim in Ely market. But to respectable Blackdeep society the Suttons remained a vexatious knot which it could not unpick and lay straight. Nobody, as Mrs. Horrocks observed, knew how to take them. Mrs. Craggs wore her wedding-ring, and when she was in Mrs. Jarvis's shop looked her straight in the face and asked for what she wanted as if she were the parson's wife. But that, according to Mrs. Horrocks, just showed her impudence. 'What a time that poor Craggs in London must have had of it:' (Mr. Horrocks was not present). 'Lord! how I do pity the man.' 'And yet,' added Mrs. Jarvis, 'and *yet*, you might eat your

dinner off Mrs. Craggs's floor. I call it hers, for she cleans it.' Clearly the living-room ought to have been a pigsty. It was particularly annoying that, although Mrs. Sutton and her family by absence from church had become infidels, they did not go to the devil openly as they ought to do, and thereby relieve Blackdeep of that pain and even hatred which are begotten by an obstinate exception to what would otherwise be a general law. Parson often preached that everybody was either a sheep or a goat. The Suttons were not sheep—that was certain ; and yet it was difficult to classify them as ordinary Blackdeep goats, creatures with horns. Mrs. Jarvis had heard that there was a peculiar breed of goats with sheep's wool and without horns. 'Esther Craggs,' she maintained, 'will one day show us what she 's after ; mark my word, you 'll see. If that brazen face means nothing, then I 'm stone-blind.'

After Jim's marriage Esther continued to manage the house and the dairy, leaving the cooking to her sister-in-law and the needle-work to her mother. Soon after five o'clock on a bright summer morning the labourer going to his work heard the unbarring of Mrs. Sutton's shutters and the withdrawal

of bolts. The casement windows and the door were then flung open, and Esther generally came into the doorway and for a few minutes faced the sun. She did not shut herself up. She walked the village like a queen, and no Fen farmer or squireling ventured to jest with her. Mrs. Jarvis could not be brought to admit her stone-blindness and clung to the theory of somebody in London; but as Esther never went to London, and nobody from London came to her, and the postmistress swore no letters passed between London and the Sutton family, Mrs. Jarvis became a little distrusted, although some of her acquaintances believed her predictions with greater firmness as they remained unfulfilled. 'I don't care what you may say; don't tell me,' was her reply to sceptical objections, and it carried great weight.

Esther died of the Blackdeep fever in the fifth year after she came home. As soon as he received the news of her death Mr. Craggs married Mrs. Perkins, who had been twelve months a widow, was admitted into partnership, and is now one of the most respected men in the City.

KATE RADCLIFFE

In 1844 there were living between Carlisle and Keswick, Robert Radcliffe and his only child Kate. They belonged to an ancient Roman Catholic family, remotely connected with the Earl of Derwentwater who was executed in 1716; but Robert Radcliffe's father had departed from the faith of his ancestors, and his descendants, excepting one, had remained Protestant. Robert had inherited a small estate and had not been brought up to any profession. He had been at Cambridge, and at one time it was thought he might become a clergyman, but he had no call that way, and returned to Cumberland after his father's death to occupy himself with his garden and books. He was a good scholar and had a library of some three thousand volumes. He married when he was about eight-and-twenty, but his wife died two years after Kate was born, and he did not marry again. He took no particular pleasure in field sports except

angling, nor in the gaieties of county society, although he was not a recluse and was on friendly terms with most of his neighbours. He was fond of wandering in his own country, and knew every mountain and every pass for twenty miles round him. His daughter was generally his companion, sometimes on her pony and sometimes on foot. Neither of them had been abroad, save once to France when she was about sixteen. They cared little for travelling in foreign parts, and he always said he got nothing out of a place in which he was a lodger. He went once a Sunday to the village church: he was patron of the living. The sermons were short and simple. Theological questions did not much concern him, and he found in Horace, Montaigne, Swift, and the County History whatever mental exercise he needed. So far he was the son of his father, but his mother had her share in him. She was a strange creature, often shaken by presentiments. Years after she was married her husband had to go to Penrith on some business which she knew would keep him there for a night. She got it into her head when she was alone in the evening that something had happened to him. She could

not go to bed nor sit still, and at three o'clock in the morning she called up her servant and bade him saddle his horse and hers. Off they started for Penrith, and she appeared before her astonished husband just as he was leaving his room at the inn for an early breakfast. She rushed speechless into his arms and sobbed.

'What is the matter?' he cried.

'Nothing.'

'Nothing wrong at home?'

'Nothing.'

She passed her hands slowly over his face as if to reassure herself, pushed back his hair, looked in his eyes, took both his hands and said softly, 'Not another word, please.'

He understood her, at least in part. She remained quietly at the inn till the afternoon and then went home with him. She was also peculiar in her continual reference to first principles. The meaningless traditions, which we mistake for things, to her were nothing. She constantly asked, 'why not?' and was therefore dangerous. 'If you go on asking "why not?"' said her aunt to her once, 'mark me you'll come to some harm.' She saw realities, and yet—it was singular—she saw ghosts. Mr. Radcliffe did not obviously resemble his mother, nor

did Kate, and yet across both of them there often shot clear, and at times even flashing gleams, indisputable evidence that in son and granddaughter she still lived. It was in his relationship to his daughter that Mr. Radcliffe betrayed his mother's blood. His reading, as we have said, was in Horace, Montaigne, and Swift, but if Kate went away for no longer than a couple of days to her cousins at Penrith, he used to watch her departure till she was hidden at the first bend of the road about half a mile distant, and then when he went back to his room and looked at her empty chair, a half-mad, unconquerable melancholy overcame him. It was not to be explained by anxiety. It was inexplicable, a revelation of something in him dark and terrible. In 1844 Kate Radcliffe was twenty-four years old. She had never been handsome, and when she was sixteen her pony had missed its footing on a treacherous mountain track and she narrowly escaped with her life. She was thrown on a rock, and her forehead was crossed henceforth beyond remedy with a long broad mark. She had never cared much for company, and her disfigurement made her care for it less. She could not help feeling that everybody noticed it, and

most people in truth noticed nothing else. She was 'the girl with a scar.' As time went on, this self-consciousness, or rather consciousness of herself as the scar, diminished, but her indifference remained, other reasons for it being added. She never had a lover; and, indeed, what man could be expected to take to himself as wife even the wisest and most affectionate of women whose brow was indented? She was advised to wear some kind of head-gear which would hide her misfortune, but she refused. 'Everybody,' she said, 'would know what was behind, and I will not be harassed by concealment.' To her father her accident did but the more endear her. There is no love so wild, no, not even the love of a mistress, as that which is sometimes found in a father or mother for a child, and often for one who is physically or even mentally defective. It is not subject to satiety and lassitude, and grows with age. To Kate also her father was more than the whole world of men and women. The best of friends weary of one another and large spaces of separation are necessary, but these two were always happy together. Theirs was the blessed intimacy which is never unmeaning and yet can endure

silence. They never felt that unpleasant stricture of the chest caused by a search for entertainment or for some subject of conversation.

Nevertheless, although Mr. Radcliffe was so much to Kate, she was herself, and consequently had wants which were not his. There had been born in her before 1844 a passion which could not be satisfied by any human being, a leaning forward and outward to something she knew not what. The sun rose over the fells; they were purple in sunset; the constellations slowly climbed the eastern sky on a clear night, and her heart lay bare: she wondered, she was bowed down with awe, and she also longed unspeakably. When she was about twenty-five years old she accepted an invitation to spend a few weeks with a friend in London. She was fond of music, and on her first Sunday she could not resist the temptation to hear a mass by Mozart in Saint Mary's, Moorfields. She was overpowered, and something moved in her soul which she had never felt in the church at home. She worshipped at Saint Mary's several times afterwards, and her friend rallied her on conversion to Roman Catholicism.

'It is the music, Kate.'

'Well, then, why not?'

'The music is so tender, so overwhelming, that thinking is impossible.'

'Is thinking the only way to the truth—putting two and two together? The noblest truth comes with music. More solid truth has been demonstrated by a song, a march, or a hymn, than by famous political and theological treatises. But I am not a Roman Catholic.'

'Oh yes! I know what you mean: it is a poetical way of saying that music stimulates aspiration.'

'No, that is not what I mean. If there be such a mental operation as passionless thinking it does not lead to much. Emotion makes intellectual discoveries.'

'I do not understand you. Revealed religion rests on intelligent conviction. It is the doctrine of a Creator, of law, of sin, of redemption, of future happiness and misery.'

'That is to say, your religion stands on authority or logic. But I cannot dispute with you. The beliefs by which some of us live—"belief" is not the right word—are not begotten or strengthened and cannot be overthrown by argument. We dare not

expose them, but if they were to fail, we should welcome death and annihilation. I repeat, I am not a Roman Catholic.'

Kate went back to her father and her native hills. The drama of Saint Mary Moorfields was continually before her eyes, and Mozart's music was continually in her ears. An ideal human being had been revealed to her who understood her, pitied her, and loved her. She was no longer a mere atom of dust, unnoticed amongst millions of millions. But the intensity of her faith gave birth to fear and doubt. Her own words recurred to her, but she was forced to admit that she must depend upon evidence. If Christ were nothing but a legend, she might as well kneel to a mist.

In those days, within five miles of her father's house was a small Roman Catholic chapel. The priest had been well educated, but he had never questioned any of the dogmas imposed on him as a child. One Sunday morning, when her father did not go to church, Kate walked over to the chapel and heard mass. The contrast with Saint Mary Moorfields was great. The sermon disappointed her. It was little more than simple insistence on ritual duty. She reflected, however, that it was not

addressed to her, but to those who had been brought up to believe. As she walked home a strange conflict arose in her. On the one hand were her imperious needs, which almost compelled assumption of fact; but the wind blew, and when she looked up the clouds sailed over the mountains. She sat on a grey rock to rest. It had lain there for thousands of years, and she was reminded of the Druid circle above the Greta. She could get no further with her thinking, and knelt down and prayed for light. It is of all prayers the most sincere, but she was not answered—at least not then. The next Sunday she went again to mass, and she had half a mind to signify her wish to confess, but what could she confess? She was burdened with no sins, and in confession she could not fully explain her case. She determined she would write to the priest and ask him to grant her an interview.

Her desertion of the parish church was observed, and of course nobody was surprised that Miss Radcliffe had turned Papist. The old Radcliffes were all Papists; there was Popery in the blood, and it came out like the gout, missing a couple of generations. Then again there

was the scar, and Miss Radcliffe would never be married. One of the neighbours who suggested the scar and maidenhood as a sufficient reason for apostasy was a retired mill-owner, who was a Wesleyan Methodist when he was in business in Manchester, but had become ostentatiously Anglican when he retired into the country. The village blacksmith, whose ancestors had worked at the same forge since the days of Queen Elizabeth, was a fearless gentleman, and hated the mill-owner as an upstart. He therefore made reply that 'other people changed their religion because they wanted to be respectable and get folk like the Radcliffes to visit them—which they won't,' the last words being spoken with emphasis and scorn.

Mr. Radcliffe was much disturbed. To him Roman Catholicism was superstition, and he wondered how any rational person could submit to it. To be sure he assented every week to supernatural history and doctrines presented to him in his own parish church, but to these he was accustomed, and his reason, acute as it was, made no objection. There was another cause for his distress. His only sister, whom he tenderly loved, had become a

foreign nun and was lost to him for ever. His life was bound up with his child, and he dreaded intervention. It is all very well to say that religious differences need not be a bar to friendship. This is one of the commonplaces of people who understand neither friendship nor religion. When Kate and he went for their long walks together, they would no longer see the same hills; and there would always be something behind her affection for him and above it. He was moodily jealous, and it was unendurable that he should be supplanted by an intruder who would hear secrets which were not entrusted to a parent. There was still some hope. He did not know how far she had gone; and he resolved to speak to her. One morning, as soon as breakfast was over, he proposed an excursion; he could talk more freely in the open air. After a few minutes' indifferent conversation he asked her abruptly if she was a Roman Catholic.

'I cannot say.'

'Cannot say! Do you still belong to our church?'

'Father, do not question me.'

'Ah! I see what has happened; it is lawful to hide from me, to prevaricate and per-

haps'—he checked himself. 'You know that ever since you have grown up I have hidden nothing from you. I have told you everything about my own affairs: I have asked your counsel, for I am old, and the wisdom of an old man is often folly. You have also told me everything: you have opened your heart to me. Think of what you have said to me: I have been mother and father to you. The trouble to me is not merely that you believe in transubstantiation and I do not, but that there is something in you which you reserve for a stranger. What has come to you?—for God's sake keep close to me for the few remaining years or months of my life. Have you reflected on the absurdities of Romanism? Is it possible that my Kate should kneel at the feet of an ignorant priest!'

She was silent. She knew as little as her father of Roman Catholic history and creeds.

He went on:

'Your aunt, my dear sister—a more beautiful creature never walked this earth—I do not know if she is alive or dead. Can that be true which kills love?'

'Father, father,' she cried, sobbing, 'nothing can separate us!'

He said no more on that subject, and seemed to recover his peace of mind, although he was not really at rest. He was getting into years and he saw that words were useless and that he must wait the issue of forces which were beyond his control. 'If she is to go, she must go: resistance will make it worse for me: I must thank God if anything of her is left for me.' Thus spoke the weary submission of age, but it was not final, and the half-savage desire for his child's undivided love awoke in him again, and he prayed that if he could not have it his end might soon come.

Kate's love for her father was deep, but she could not move a single step merely to pacify him. She could have yielded herself entirely to him in worldly matters; she would have doubted many of her strongest beliefs if he had contested them; she would have given up all her happiness for him; she would have died for him; but she could not let go the faintest of her religious dreams, although it was impossible to put them into words.

She wrote her letter to the priest. She found him living in a cottage and was somewhat taken aback when she entered.

There were hardly any books to be seen, but a crucifix hung on the wall.

'Miss Radcliffe—an old and honoured name! What can be the object of your visit?'

'Father, I am in distress. I want something which perhaps you can give.'

'Ah, my child, I understand. You would like to confess, but you are Protestant; I cannot absolve you. Return to the true fold and you can be released.'

'O Father, I have committed no crime; I come to you because I doubt and I *must* believe.'

The holy father was unused to such a penitent, and was perplexed and agitated.

'Doubt, my child—yes, even the faithful are sometimes troubled with doubt, a temptation from the Enemy of souls. Were you one of the flock I could prescribe for you. But perhaps you mean doubt of the heresies of your communion. In that case I can recommend a little manual. Take it away with you, study it, and see me again.'

'Father,' said Kate, pointing to the crucifix, 'did He, the Son of God, Son of the Virgin, really live on this earth? did He break His heart for me? If He did, I am saved.'

'Surely your own minister has instructed you on this point; it is the foundation even of Protestantism.'

'I prefer to seek instruction and guidance from you; answer me this one question.'

'Satan has never thus assaulted me, and I have never heard of any such suggestion to one of my people. I am a poor parish priest. Take the manual. It has been compiled by learned men: read it carefully with prayer: I also will pray for you that you may be gathered into the eternal Church.'

Kate took the manual and went home. There was but little history in it, but there was much about the person of Christ. He was man and God 'without confusion and without change.' As man he had to learn as other men learn, and, as God, he knew everything. He was sinless, and the lusts of the flesh had no power over him, but he had a human body, and was necessarily subject to its infirmities. His human nature was derived from his mother. God was not born from her, and yet she was the mother of God. Kate was able to see that some part of what looked like sheer contradiction was the conjunction of opposites from which it is impossible to escape in the attempt to

express the Infinite, but in the manual this contradiction was presented with repulsive hardness. The compiler desired to subjugate and depose the reason. This was not the Christ she wanted. She hungered for the God, the Man, at whose feet she could have fallen: she would have washed them with tears, she would have wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed them and anointed them with ointment. She could have followed Him to the court of the High Priest and have gloried in discipleship: she could have taken the thief's place beside Him on the cross, and she would not have exchanged those moments of torture in companionship with Him for a life of earthly bliss. But—that fatal *but*—did He ever live, did He still live, did He love her, did He know how much she loved Him? Thus it has always been. There is an impulse in man which drives him to faith; the commonplace world does not satisfy him; he is forced to assume a divine object for his homage and love, and when he goes out into the fields it has vanished.

Kate did not call again upon the priest. Her father came to the conclusion that there was nothing in his suspicions, and that she

had been suffering from one of her not uncommon fits of nervous restlessness and depression. This was a mercy, for his bodily health had begun to fail. The winter was very severe, and in the dark days just before Christmas he took to his bed and presently died, having suffered no pain and with no obscuration of his mind until the last ten minutes. Kate had nursed him with pious care: she was alone with him and closed his eyes about four o'clock in the morning. At first she was overcome with hysterical passion, and this was succeeded by shapeless thoughts which streamed up in her incessantly as the mists stream up from a valley at sunrise. Not until day broke did she leave the room and waken the household.

An epoch is created rather by the person than by the event. The experience which changes one man is nothing to another. Some will pass through life without a mark from anything that happens to them; others are transformed by a smile or a cloud. So also the same experience will turn different men into totally different paths. Kate had never seen death before. It smote her with such force that for months and months her father was before her eyes and she could not convince herself that he was not with her.

But she went no further towards Roman Catholicism. She let the facts stand. Once when she was walking on the moors she stretched out her arms again and was urged to pray, but she felt that her prayer would be loss of strength and she stood erect. For nearly a twelvemonth she simply endured. She remembered a story in an old *Amulet*, one of a series of annuals, bound in crimson cloth and fashionable at that time, of a sailor stranded on a rock in the sea. The waves rose to his lips, but he threw back his head, and at that moment there was a pause and the tide turned. It might turn for her or it might not; she must not move. She read scarcely any books and lived much in the open air. The autumn was one of extraordinary splendour. September rains after a dry summer washed the air and filled the tarns and becks. Wherever she went she was accompanied by that most delicious sound of falling waters. The clouds, which through July and August had been nothing but undefined, barren vapour, gathered themselves together and the interspaces of sky were once more brilliantly blue. Day after day earth and heaven were almost too beautiful, for it was painful that her finite appre-

hension should be unequal to such infinite loveliness. She received no such answer as that for which she hoped when she knelt by the grey rock, but that is the way with the celestial powers; they reply to our passionate demands by putting them aside and giving us that for which we did not ask. *We know not how to pray as we ought.*

MR. WHITTAKER'S RETIREMENT

I HAD been a partner in the house of Whittaker, Johnson, and Marsh, in the wholesale drug trade, for twenty-five years, and, for the last ten years, senior partner. For the first nine years of my seniority I was not only nominally, but practically, the head of the firm. I had ceased to occupy myself with details, but nothing of importance was concluded without consulting me: I was the pivot on which the management turned. In the tenth year, after a long illness, my wife died: I was very ill myself, and for months not a paper was sent to me. When I returned to work I found that the junior partners, who were pushing men, had distributed between them what I was accustomed to do, and that some changes which they thought to be indispensable had been made. I resumed my duties as well as I could, but it was difficult to pick up the dropped threads, and I was dependent for explanation upon my subordinates.

Many transactions too, from a desire to avoid worrying me, were carried through without my knowledge, although formerly, as a matter of course, they would have been submitted to me. Strangers, when they called, asked to see Johnson or Marsh. I directed the messenger that they were to be shown into my room if I was disengaged. This was a failure, for, when they came, I was obliged to ask for help, which was not given very generously. Sometimes I sent for the papers, but it took a long time to read them, and my visitors became impatient. During one of these interviews, I remember that I was sorely perplexed, but I had managed to say something loosely with no particular meaning. Johnson came in and at once took up the case, argued for ten minutes while I sat silent and helpless, and an arrangement was concluded in which I really had no voice whatever. Now and then I strove to assert myself by disapproval of suggestions offered to me, but in the end was generally forced to admit I was wrong. We had a very large order for which we were obliged to make special arrangements with manufacturers. Both Johnson and Marsh were of opinion that a particular firm which had often supplied us was not to be

trusted, as our dealings with them during my absence had been unsatisfactory. I was inclined foolishly but naturally, to attach little importance to anything which had been done entirely without me, ridiculed their objections, and forced my decision upon them. The firm broke down; our contract with them was cancelled; another had to be made under pressure, and we lost about five hundred pounds. Although I was not reminded of my responsibility in so many words, I knew that I was solely to blame; I became more than ever convinced I was useless, and I was much dejected. At last I made up my mind to retire. I was urged to remain, but not, as I imagined, with any great earnestness, and on the 31st December 1856 I left the office in Eastcheap never to enter it again.

For the first two or three weeks I enjoyed my freedom, but when they had passed I had had enough of it. *I had nothing to do!* Every day at the hours when business was at its height, I thought of the hurry, of the inquiries, of the people waiting in the anteroom, of the ringing of bells, of the rapid instructions to clerks, of the consultations after the letters were opened, of our anxious deliberations, of the journeys to Scotland

at an hour's notice, and of the interviews with customers. I pictured to myself that all this still went on, but went on without me, while I had no better occupation than to unpack a parcel, pick the knots out of the string, and put it in a string-box. I saw my happy neighbours drive off in the morning and return in the evening. I envied them the haste, which I had so often cursed, over breakfast. I envied them, while I took an hour over lunch, the chop devoured in ten minutes; I envied them the weariness with which they dragged themselves along their gravel-paths, half an hour late for dinner. I was thrown almost entirely amongst women. I had no children, but a niece thirty-five years old, devoted to evangelical church affairs, kept house for me, and she had a multitude of female acquaintances, two or three of whom called every afternoon. Sometimes, to relieve my loneliness, I took afternoon tea, and almost invariably saw the curate. I was the only man present. It was just as if, being strong, healthy, and blessed with a good set of teeth, I were being fed on water-gruel. The bird-wittedness, the absence of resistance and of difficulty, were intolerable. The curate, and occasionally the rector, tried to engage me,

as I was a good subscriber, in discussion on church affairs, but there seemed to me to be nothing in these which required the force which was necessary for the commonest day in the City. Mrs. Coleman and the rector were once talking together most earnestly when I entered the room, and I instinctively sat down beside them, but I found that the subject of their eager debate was the allotment of stalls at a bazaar. They were really excited—stirred I fully admit to their depths. I believe they were more absorbed and anxious than I was on that never-to-be-forgotten morning when Mortons and Nicholsons both failed, and for two hours it was just a toss-up whether we should not go too.

I went with my niece one day to St. Paul's Churchyard to choose a gown, but it was too much for me to be in a draper's shop when the brokers' drug sales were just beginning. I left my niece, walked round the Churchyard as fast as I could, trying to make people believe I was busy, and just as I came to Doctors Commons I stumbled against Larkins, who used to travel for Jackman and Larkins.

'Hullo, Whittaker!' said he, 'haven't seen you since you left. Lucky dog! Wish I could do the same. Ta-ta; can't stop.'

A year ago Mr. Larkins, with the most pressing engagement in front of him, would have spared me just as much time as I liked to give him.

Formerly I woke up (sometimes, it is true, after a restless night) with the feeling that before me lay a day of adventure. I did not know what was in my letters, nor what might happen. Now, when I rose I had nothing to anticipate but fifteen hours of monotony varied only by my meals. My niece proposed that I should belong to a club, but the members of clubs were not of my caste. I had taken a pride in my garden and determined I would attend to it more myself. I bought gardening books, but the gardener knew far more than I could ever hope to know, and I could not displace him. I had been in the habit of looking through a microscope in the evening, although I did not understand any science in which the microscope is useful, and my slides were bought ready-made. I brought it out now in the daytime, but I was soon weary of it and sold it. We went to Worthing for a month. We had what were called comfortable lodgings and the weather was fine, but if I had been left to myself I should have gone back to Stockwell directly

my boxes were unpacked. We drove eastwards as far as we could and then westward, and after that there was nothing more to be done except to do the same thing over again. At the end of the first week I could stand it no longer, and we returned. I fancied my liver was out of order and consulted a physician. He gave me some medicine and urged me to 'cultivate cheerful society,' and to take more exercise. I therefore tried long walks, and often extended them beyond Croydon, and once as far as Reigate, but I had never been accustomed to walking by myself, and as I knew the names of scarcely half-a-dozen birds or trees, my excursions gave me no pleasure. I have stood on Banstead Downs in the blaze of sunlight on a still October morning, and when I saw the smoke-cloud black as night hang over the horizon northwards, I have longed with the yearning of an imprisoned convict to be the meanest of the blessed souls enveloped in it.

I determined at last to break up my household at Stockwell, to move far away into the country; to breed fowls—an occupation which I was assured was very profitable and very entertaining; dismiss my niece and marry again. I began to consider which lady of those whom I knew would

suit me best, and I found one who was exactly the person I wanted. She was about thirty-five years old, was cheerful, fond of going out (I never was), a good housekeeper, played the piano fairly well, and, as the daughter of a retired major in the Army, had a certain air and manner which distinguished her from the wives and daughters of our set and would secure for me an acquaintance with the country gentlefolk, from which, without her, I should probably be debarred. She had also told me when I mentioned my project to her, but saying nothing about marriage, that she doted on fowls—they had such pretty ways. As it was obviously prudent not to engage myself until I knew more of her, I instigated my niece in a careless way to invite her to stay a fortnight with us. She came, and once or twice I was on the verge of saying something decisive to her, but I could not. A strange terror of change in my way of life took hold upon me. I should now have to be more at home, and although I might occupy myself with the fowls during the morning and afternoon, the evening must be spent in company, and I could not endure for more than half an hour a drawing-room after dinner. There

was another reason for hesitation. I could see the lady would accept me if I proposed to her, but I was not quite sure why. She would in all probability survive me, and I fancied that her hope of survival might be her main reason for consenting. I gave her up, but no sooner had she left us than I found myself impelled to make an offer to a handsome girl of eight-and-twenty who I was ass enough to dream might love me. I was happily saved by an accident not worth relating, and although I afterwards dwelt much upon the charms of two or three other ladies and settled with myself I would take one of them, nothing came of my resolution. I was greatly distressed by this growing indecision. It began to haunt me. If I made up my mind to-day that I would do this or that, I always had on the morrow twenty reasons for not doing it. I was never troubled with this malady in Eastcheap. I was told that decay in the power of willing was one of the symptoms of softening of the brain, and this then was what was really the matter with me! It might last for years! Wretched creature! my life was to be nothing better than that of the horse in Bewick's terrible picture. I was 'waiting for death.'

Part of my income was derived from interest on money lent to a cousin. Without any warning I had a letter to say that he was bankrupt, and that his estate would probably not pay eighteenpence in the pound. It was quite clear that I must economise, and what to do and whither to go was an insoluble problem to me. By chance I met an old City acquaintance who told me of a 'good thing' in Spanish bonds which, when information was disclosed which he possessed, were certain to rise twenty per cent. If what he said was true—and I had no reason to doubt him—I could easily get back without much risk about two-thirds of the money I had lost. Had I been in full work, I do not believe I should have wasted a shilling on the speculation, but the excitement attracted me, and I ventured a considerable sum. In about a fortnight there was a sudden jump of two per cent. in my securities, and I was so much elated that I determined to go farther. I doubled my stake; in three weeks another rise was announced; I again increased the investment, and now I watched the market with feverish eagerness. One day I was downstairs a quarter of an hour earlier than usual waiting for the boy who brought the paper.

I tore it open and to my horror saw that there was a panic on the Stock Exchange; my bonds were worthless, and I was ruined.

I had always secretly feared that this would happen, and that I should be so distracted as to lose my reason. To my surprise, I was never more self-possessed, and I was not so miserable as might have been expected. I at once gave notice of discharge to my servants, sold nearly all my furniture and let my house. I was offered help, but declined it. I moved into a little villa in one of the new roads then being made at Brixton, and found that I possessed a capital which, placed in Consols—for I would not trust anything but the public funds—brought me one hundred and twenty-five pounds a year. This was not enough for my niece, myself, and a maid, and I was forced to consider whether I could not obtain some employment. To return to Eastcheap was clearly out of the question, but there was a possibility, although I was fifty-six, that my experience might make me useful elsewhere. I therefore called on Jackman and Larkins at twelve o'clock, the hour at which I knew there was a chance of finding them able to see me. During my prosperity I always

walked straight into their room marked 'private,' but now I went into the clerks' office, took off my hat and modestly inquired if either Mr. Jackman or Mr. Larkins could spare me a minute. I was not asked to sit down—I, to whom these very clerks a little over a twelvemonth ago would have risen when I entered; but my message was taken, and I was told in reply that both Mr. Jackman and Mr. Larkins were engaged. I was bold enough to send in another message and was informed I might call in two hours' time. I went out, crossed London Bridge, and seeing the doors of St. Saviour's, Southwark, open, rested there awhile. When I returned at the end of two hours, I had to wait another ten minutes until a luncheon tray came out. A bell then rang, which a clerk answered, and in about five minutes, with a 'come this way' I was ushered into the presence of Jackman, who was reading the newspaper with a decanter and a glass of sherry by his side.

'Well, Whittaker, what brings you here? Ought to be looking after your grapes at Stockwell—but I forgot; heard you'd given up grape-growing. Ah! odd thing, a man never retires, but he gets into some mess; marries or dabbles on the Stock Exchange.

I've known lots of cases like yours. What can we do for you? Times are horribly bad.' Jackman evidently thought I was going to borrow some money of him, and his tone altered when he found I did not come on that errand.

'I was very sorry—really I was, my dear fellow—to hear of your loss, but it was a damned foolish thing to do, excuse me.'

'Mr. Jackman,' said I, 'I have not lost all my property, but I cannot quite live on what is left. Can you give me some work? My connection and knowledge of your business may be of some service.' I had put hundreds of pounds in this man's pocket, but forbore to urge this claim upon him.

'Delighted, I am sure, if it were possible, but we have no vacancy, and, to be quite plain with you, you are much too old. We could get more out of a boy at ten shillings a week than we could out of you.'

Mr. Jackman drank another glass of sherry.

'But, sir'—(sir! that I should ever call Tom Jackman 'sir,' but I did)—'as I just said, my experience and connection might be valuable.'

'Oh, as to experience, me and Larkins

supply all that, and the clerks do as they are told. Never keep a clerk more than two years: he then begins to think he knows too much and wants more pay. As to connection, pardon me—mean nothing, of course—but your recommendation now wouldn't bring much.'

At this moment the door opened and Larkins entered in haste. 'I say, Jackman——' then turning and seeing me,—'Hullo, Whittaker, what the devil are you doing here? Jackman, I've just heard——'

'Good-bye, Whittaker,' said Jackman, 'sorry can't help you.'

Neither of them offered to shake hands, and I passed out into the street. The chop-houses were crammed; waiters were rushing hither and thither; I looked up at the first floor of that very superior house, used solely by principals, where I often had my lunch, and again crossed London Bridge on my way back. London Bridge at half-past one! I do not suppose I had ever been there at half-past one in my life. I saw a crowd still passing both southwards and northwards. At half-past nine it all went one way and at half-past six another. It was the morning and evening crowd which was the people to me. These half-past one

o'clock creatures were strange to me, loafers, nondescripts. I was faint and sick when I reached home, for I walked all the way, and after vainly trying to eat something went straight to bed. But the next post brought me a note saying that Jackman and Larkins were willing to engage me at a salary of £100 a year—much more, it was added, than they would have paid for more efficient service, but conceded as a recognition of the past. The truth was, as I afterwards found out, that Larkins persuaded Jackman that it would increase their reputation to take old Whittaker. Larkins too had become a little tired of soliciting orders, and I could act as his substitute. I was known to nearly all the houses with which they did business and very likely should gain admittance where a stranger would be denied. My hours would be long, from nine till seven, and must be observed rigidly. Instead of my three-and-sixpenny lunch I should now have to take in my pocket whatever I wanted in the middle of the day. For dinner I must substitute a supper—a meal which did not suit me. I should have to associate with clerks, to meet as a humble subordinate those with whom I was formerly intimate as an equal; but all this was

overlooked, and I was happy, happy as I had not been for months.

It was on a Wednesday when I received my appointment, and on Monday I was to begin. I said my prayers more fervently that night than I had said them for years, and determined that, please God, I would always go to church every Sunday morning no matter how fine it might be. There were only three clear week-days, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, to be got through. I imagined them to be holidays, although I had never before taken three consecutive holidays, save in those wretched Augusts or Septembers, when pride annually forced me away to the seaside. At last Monday came: our breakfast hour was henceforth fixed at half-past seven, and at eight o'clock I started to walk to Kennington, and thence to ride by an omnibus to King William's statue. Oh! with what joy did I shut the little garden gate and march down the road, once more somebody! I looked round, saw other little front gates open, each by-street contributed, so that in the Kennington Road there was almost a procession moving steadily and uniformly City-wards, and *I* was in it. I was still a part of the great world; something depended on

me. Fifty-six? yes, but what was that? Many men are at their best at fifty-six. So exhilarated was I, that just before I mounted the omnibus—it was a cold morning, but I would not ride inside—I treated myself to a twopenny cigar. My excitement soon wore off. I could not so far forget myself as not to make suggestions now and then, and Jackman took a delight in snubbing me. It was a trial to me also to sit with the clerks. We had never set ourselves up as grand people at Stockwell, but I had all my life been accustomed to delicate food properly cooked, and now that my appetite was declining with my years, I would almost at any time have gone without a meal rather than eat anything that was coarse or dirtily served. My colleagues ridiculed my 'Stockwell manners,' as they called them, and were very witty, so they thought, in their inquiries when I produced my sandwich wrapped up in a clean napkin, how much it cost me for my washing. They were a very cheap set, had black finger-nails, and stuck their pens behind their ears. One of them always brought a black-varnished canvas bag with him, not respectably stiff like leather—a puckered, dejected-looking bag. It was deposited in the washing place to be out of

the way of the sun. At one o'clock it was brought out and emptied of its contents, which were usually a cold chop and a piece of bread. A plate, knife and fork, and some pepper and salt were produced from the desk, and after the meat, which could be cut off from the chop, was devoured, the bone was gnawed, wrapped up in paper, and put back in the bag. The plate, knife, and fork were washed in the wash-hand basin and wiped with the office jack-towel. It was hard when old business friends called and I had to knock at the inner door and say, 'Mr. —— wants to see you, sir,' the object of the visit not being entrusted to me. A few of them behaved politely to me, but to others it seemed to be a pleasure to humble me. On that very first Monday, Bullock, the junior in Wiggens, Moggs, and Bullock, burst into the room. He knew me very well, but took no notice of me, although I was alone, except to ask—

'Is Mr. Jackman in?'

'No, sir, can I do anything for you?'

He did not deign to say a word, but went out, slamming the door behind him.

Nevertheless I kept up my spirits, or rather they kept themselves up. At five o'clock, when the scramble to get the letters

signed began, I thought of our street at home, so dull at that hour, of the milkman, and the muffin-boy, of the curate, and of my niece's companions, and reflected, thank God, that I was in the City, a man amongst men. When seven o'clock came and the gas was put out, there was the anticipation also of the fight for a place in the omnibus, especially if it was a wet night, and the certainty that I should meet with one or two neighbours who would recognise me. No more putting up window-blinds, pulling up weeds in the back garden, sticking in seeds which never grew, or errands to suburban shops at midday. How I used in my retirement to detest the sight of those little shopkeepers when the doors of Glyn's Bank were swinging to and fro! I came home dead-beaten now, it is true, but it was a luxury to be dead-beaten, and I slept more soundly than I had ever slept in my life. In about six months my position improved a little. Jackman's love for sherry grew upon him, and once or twice, to Larkins's disgust, his partner was not quite as fit to appear in public as he ought to have been. Very often he was absent, sick. Two of the cheap clerks also left in order to better

themselves. I never shall forget the afternoon—I felt as if I could have danced for joy—when Larkins said to me, 'Whittaker, Mr. Jackman hasn't very good health, and if he's not here when I am out, you must answer anybody who calls, but don't commit yourself—and—let me see—I was going to tell you you'll have ten pounds a year more, beginning next quarter — and there was something else — Oh! I recollect, if anybody should want to see Mr. Jackman when he happens to be unwell here, and I am not with him, send for me if you know where I am. If you don't know, you must do the best you can.' My office coat had hitherto been an old shiny, ragged thing, and I had always taken off my shirt-cuffs when I began work, because they so soon became dirty. I rammed the old coat that night into the fire; brought my second-best coat in a brown paper parcel the next morning, and wore my shirt-cuffs all day long. Continually I had to think—only fancy, to *think* —once more; in a very small way, it is true, but still to think and to act upon my thought, and when Larkins came in and inquired if anybody had called, he now and then said 'all right' when I told him what I had done. A clerk from my old office swaggered

in and did not remove his hat. I descended from my stool and put on my own hat. The next time he came he was more polite. I have now had two years of it, and have not been absent for a day. I hope I may go on till I drop. My father died in a fit; his father died in a fit; and I myself often feel giddy, and things go round for a few seconds. I should not care to have a fit here, because there would be a fuss and a muddle, but I should like, just when everything was *quite* straight, to be able to get home safely and then go off. To lie in bed for weeks and worry about my work is what I could not endure.

CONFESSIONS OF A SELF-TORMENTOR

My father was a doctor in a country town. Strictly speaking it was not a town, and yet it was something more than a village. His practice extended over a district with a radius of five or six miles from his house; he drove a gig and dispensed his own medicines. My mother was the youngest daughter of a poor squire who owned two or three hundred acres and lived at what was called the Park, which was really nothing more than two or three fields generally laid for hay, a small enclosure being reserved for a garden. We were not admitted into county society, and my mother would not associate with farmers and tradesfolk. She was a good woman, affectionate to her children and husband, but never forgot that —so she thought—she had married below her station. She had an uncle who had been in the Indian Army, and his portrait in

full regimentals hung in the dining-room. How her heart warmed to the person who inquired who that officer was! When she went home, it was never to her 'home,' but to the 'Park.'

My father's income was not more than eight or nine hundred a year, and his expenses were heavy, but nevertheless my mother determined that I should go to the university, and I was accordingly sent to a grammar school. I had not been there more than three years, and was barely fourteen years old, when my father was pitched out of his gig and killed. He had insured his life for two thousand pounds, which was as much as he could afford, and my mother had another two thousand pounds of her own. Her income therefore was less than two hundred a year. She could not teach, she would not let lodgings, nor was she wanted at the Park. She therefore took a cottage, small but genteel, at a rental of ten pounds a year, and managed as best she could. The furniture was partly sold, but the regimental portrait was saved. Unhappily, as the cottage ceilings were very low, it was not an easy task to hang it. The only place to be found for it, out of the way of the chairs,

was opposite the window, in a parlour about twelve feet square, called the drawing-room; but it was too long even there, and my great-uncle's legs descended behind the sofa, and could not be seen unless it was moved. 'The cottage is a shocking come-down,' said my mother to the rector, 'but it is not vulgar; it is at least a place in which a lady can live.' Of course the university was now out of the question, and at fifteen I left school. I had read a little Virgil, a little Horace, and a book or two of Homer. I had also got through the first six books of Euclid after a fashion, and had advanced as far as quadratic equations in algebra, but had no mathematical talent whatever. My mother would not hear of trade as an occupation for me, and she could not afford to make me a soldier, sailor, doctor, lawyer, or parson. At last the county member, at the request of her father, obtained for me a clerkship in the Stamps and Taxes Department. These were the days before competitive examinations. She was now able to say that her son was in H.M. Civil Service. I had eighty pounds a year, and lodged at Clapton with an aunt, my father's sister.

Although I had been only half-educated,

I was fond of reading, and I had plenty of time for it. I read good books, and read them with enthusiasm. I was much taken with the Greek dramatists, especially with Euripides, but my only means of access to them was through translations. My aunt had another nephew who came to see her now and then. He had obtained an open exhibition at Oxford, and one day I found that he had a Greek Euripides in his pocket, and that he needed little help from a dictionary. He sometimes brought with him a college friend, and well do I remember a sneer from this gentleman about the poor creatures whose acquaintance with Æschylus was derived from Potter. I did not look at a translation again for some time.

The men at my office were a curious set. The father of one was a leader of the lowest blackguards in a small borough, who had much to do with determining elections there; another bore the strongest resemblance to a well-known peer; and another was the legitimate and perfectly scoundrel offspring of a newspaper editor. I formed no friendships with any of my colleagues, but one of them I greatly envied. He was deaf and dumb, the son of a poor clergy-

man, and had an extraordinary passion for botany. Every holiday was devoted to rambling about the country near London. He cared little for anything but his favourite science, but that he understood, and he never grew tired of it. I took no account of his deafness and dumbness; the one thing I saw was his mastership over a single subject. Gradually my incompleteness came to weigh on me like a nightmare. I imagined that if I had learned any craft which required skill, I should have been content. I was depressed when I looked at the watchmaker examining my watch. I should have walked the streets erect if there had been one thing which I could do better than anybody I met. There was nothing: I stood for nothing: no purpose was intended by God through me. I was also constitutionally inaccurate—this was another of my troubles—and nothing short of the daily use of a fact made me sure of it. No matter how zealously I went over and over again a particular historical period, I always broke down the moment my supposed acquisitions were tested by questions or conversation. I have read a book with the greatest attention I could muster, and have found, when I have

seen a simple examination paper on it, that I could not have got a dozen marks. Of what value, then, were my notions on matters demanding far greater concentration of thought? Accuracy I fancied might be acquired, but I was mistaken. It is a gift as much as the art of writing sublime poetry. I struggled and struggled with pencil and précis, but I did not improve. My cousin's before-mentioned friend took delight in checking, like an accountant, what was said to him, especially by me, and although I saw that this for the most part was a mere trick, I could not deny that it proved continually that my so-called opinions were not worth a straw. The related virtues of accuracy, strength of memory, and clear definition, are of great importance, but I over-estimated them. I see now that human affairs are so complicated, that had I possessed the advantages bestowed on my cousin and his companion, they would not have prevented delusions, all the more perilous, perhaps, because I should have been more confident. However, at the time of which I am speaking, I was wretched, and believed that my wretchedness was entirely due to deficiencies and weaknesses, from which my

friends were free. No sorrow of genius is greater than the daily misery of the man with no gifts, who is not properly equipped, and has desires out of all proportion to his capacity.

I had no real love of art and did not understand it. I went to concerts, but the only part of a sonata or symphony which took hold of me was that which was melodious. The long passages with no striking theme in them conveyed nothing to me, and as to Bach, excepting now and then, his music was like a skilful recitation of nonsense verses. The *Marseillaise* on a barrel-organ was intelligible, but gymnastics on strings—what did they represent? With pictures the case was somewhat different. I often left Clapton early in order that I might have half an hour at Christie's in quiet, and I have spent many pleasant moments in those rooms on sunny mornings in May and June before De Wint's and Turner's landscapes. But I knew nothing about them. Without previous instruction I should probably have placed something worthless on the same level with them, and I could not fix my attention on them long. A water-colour by Turner, on which all his power had been expended, an abstract of

years and years of toil and observation, was unable to detain me for more than five minutes, and in those five minutes I very likely did not detect one of its really distinguishing qualities. As to the early religious pictures of the Italian school, I cared nothing either for subject or treatment, and would have given a cartload of them for a drawing by Hunt of a bird's nest. Wanting an ear for music and an eye for pictorial merit, I believed, or affected to believe, that the raptures of people who possessed the ear and eye were a sham. It irritated me to hear my aunt play, although she had been well taught in her youth and was a skilful performer. I know she would have liked to feel that she gave me some pleasure, and that her playing was admired, but I was so openly indifferent to it that at last she always shut the piano if I happened to come into the room while she was practising. I remember saying to her when she was talking to me about one of Mozart's quartets she had just heard, that music was immoral, inasmuch as it provoked such enormous insincerity. It is strange that, although spite was painful to me, especially towards her, I could not help indulging in it.

My failings gradually wrought in me confirmed bitterness. I persuaded myself that the interest which people appeared to take in me was mere polite pretence. There may be enough selfishness in the world to explain misanthropy, but there is never enough to justify it, and what we imagine to be indifference to us is often merely the reserve caused by our own refusal to surrender ourselves to legitimate and generous emotions. Oddly enough, I frequently made hasty and spasmodic offers of intimate friendship to people who were not prepared for them, and the natural absence of immediate response was a further reason for scepticism. A man to whom I was suddenly impelled was in want of money, and I pressed ten pounds upon him. He could not pay me at the appointed time, whereupon I set him down as an ungrateful brute, and moralised like Timon.

There was at that time living in London a lady whom I must call Mrs. A. She was the widow of a professor at Cambridge who had died young, and she might have been about five-and-thirty or forty years old. My cousin, who had known her husband, introduced me to her. She was not handsome; the cheek-bones were a little too prominent,

and her face was weather-worn, but not by wind and sun. Nevertheless it was a quietly victorious face. Her ways were simple and refined. She had travelled much, as far even as Athens, and was complete mistress of Italian and French. Her voice struck me—it was so musical, and adapted itself so delicately to varying shades of thought and emotion. I have often reflected how little we get out of the voice in talking. How delightful is the natural modulation which follows the sense, and how much the sense gains if it is so expressed rather than in half-inarticulate grunts, say, between the inspirations and expirations of a short pipe!

Mrs. A. took much notice of me, and her attitude towards me was singular. She was not quite old enough to be motherly to me, but she was too old for restrictions on her intercourse with me, and her wide experience and wisdom well qualified her to be my directress. Often when I went to her house nobody was there, and she would talk to me with freedom on all sorts of subjects. I did not fall in love with her, but she was still attractive as a woman, and difference of sex, delightful manners, subtle intellect, expressive grey eyes, and lovely

black hair streaked with white, might have taught me much which I could have learned from no ordinary friend. My cousin often went with me to Mrs. A.'s, but I was never at rest when he was there. I fancied then that if I could have rendered a dozen lines of Gray's *Elegy* into correct Greek, life would have nothing more to give me. Mrs. A. was too well-behaved to encourage conversation in my cousin's presence which disclosed my inferiority to him, but without premeditation it sometimes turned where I could not follow. As I have said, she had travelled in Greece. She understood something of modern Greek, and she and my cousin one evening fell to comparing it with ancient Greek. I sat sulky and dumb. At last she turned to me, and asked me smilingly why I was so quiet. I replied that I did not understand a word of what they were saying (which was untrue), and that if they would talk about Stamps and Taxes I could join. She divined in an instant what was the matter with me, and diverted the discussion so that it might be within my reach. 'I must confess,' she said, 'that my knowledge of philology is no better than yours. Philology demands the labour of a life. I often wonder what the teacher, student,

and school history of England will be at the end of another thousand years. Perhaps, however, in another thousand years books will no longer be written except on physics. Men will say, "What have we to do with the Wars of the Roses?" and as to general literature, they will become weary of tossing over and over again the same old ideas and endeavouring to imagine new variations of passion. The literary man will cease from the land. Something of this sort must come to pass, unless the human race is to be smothered.' My cousin said he prayed that her prophecy might come true, but I remained hard and stockish. Her sweet temper, however, could not be disturbed, and she announced that she was going to see Rachel, the great actress, and invited us both to accompany her. I refused, on the ground that I knew nothing of French (also untrue). She assured me that if I would read the play beforehand I should be in no difficulty. I was really touched by her kindness, but the devil in me would not let me yield. I missed the opportunity of seeing Rachel, just as I missed many other opportunities of more importance. Oh! when I look back now over my life and call to mind

what I might have had simply for taking and did not take, my heart is like to break. The curse for me has not been plucking forbidden fruit, but the refusal of divine fruit offered me by heavenly angels.

Mrs. A.'s circle of acquaintances widened during the two or three years of my friendship with her. She often pressed me to meet them, but I nearly always held back. I told her that I did not care for mere acquaintances, and that certainly not more than one or two of her visitors would shed a tear if they heard she was dead. 'To possess one or two friends,' she said, 'who would weep at my departure would be quite enough. It is as much as anybody ought to demand, but you are mistaken in supposing that those who would not break their hearts for us may not be of value, and even precious. We are so made that the attraction which unites us to our fellow-creatures is, and ought to be, of varying intensity, and there is something to be obtained from a weaker bond which is not to be had from a stronger. I like the society of Mrs. Arnold and Madame Sorel. I enjoy the courtesy which is not slipper-and-dressing-gown familiarity, and their way of looking at things, especially Madame

Sorel's, is different from mine and instructs me. Forgive me for reminding you that in our Father's house are many mansions, and if we wish to be admitted to some of them we must wear our best clothes, and when we are inside we must put on our company manners.' She was quite right; Mrs. Arnold and Madame Sorel could have given me just what I needed.

My visits to Mrs. A. became less and less frequent, and at last altogether ceased. It was actually painful to me to neglect her, but I forced myself to it, or to put it more correctly the Demon of pure Malignity, for there is such a demon in Hell, drove me to it.

Some years afterwards I wrote to her asking her if she could get work for a starving man whom she had known in other days, and she helped him to obtain it. Two years after she had done this kind office, and had shown she had not forgotten me, she died, and I went to her funeral in Brompton Cemetery. It was a cold day, and black fog hung over London. When the coffin was lowered into the grave I wept many tears. I had been guilty of a neglect which was wicked injustice, and I could never hear her say she had forgiven me. I understood the meaning of atonement, and why it has

been felt in all ages that, by itself, reformation is insufficient. I attempted an expiation, which I need not describe. It is painful, but the sacrifice which I trust I shall offer to the end of my days brings me a measure of relief.

About a twelvemonth after Mrs. A.'s death I fell sick with inflammation of the lungs. Once before, when I was ill, I declined my aunt's attendance. I said that I did not believe it was possible for mere friendship or affection to hold out against long watching, and that there must come a time when the watcher would be relieved by the death of the patient. I declared that nothing was more intolerable to me than to know that anybody sacrificed the least trifle on my behalf, and that if my aunt really wished me to get better she would at once send for a paid nurse. I had a paid nurse, but Alice, our servant, told me afterwards that my poor aunt cried a good deal when she saw her place taken by a stranger. She was now nearly seventy, but she offered herself again, and I thankfully accepted her, stipulating of course that she should be helped. I wondered how she could retain her love for me, how she could kiss me so tenderly morning and night, and apparently

not remember my unkindness to her. But therein lies the difference between a man and a woman. Woman is Christian. A woman's love will sweep like a river in flood over a wrong which has been done to it and bury it for ever.

I am not regenerate, but who is ever regenerate? My insignificance and defects do not worry me as they did: I do not kick at them, and I am no longer covetous of other people's talents and virtues. I am grateful for affection, for kindness, and even for politeness. What a tremendous price do we have to pay for what we so slowly learn, and learn so late!

A LETTER TO THE 'RAMBLER'

SENT to the *Rambler* March 1752, but, alas, in that month the *Rambler* came to an end. I am not sorry it was not printed. On re-reading it I find passages here and there which are unconscious and unavoidable imitations of Dr. Johnson. No use in re-writing them now. J. R.

June 1760.

SIR,—I venture to send you a part of the history of my life, trusting that my example may be a warning against confidence in our own strength to resist even the meanest temptation.

My father was a prosperous haberdasher in Cheapside, and I was his eldest son. My mother was the daughter of the clerk to the Fellmongers' Company. She had reached the mature age of nine-and-twenty when she received an offer of matrimony from my father, and after much anxious consideration

and much consultation with her parents, prudently decided to accept it, although to the end of her days she did not scruple openly to declare that she had lowered herself by marrying a man who was compelled to bow behind a counter to the wife of a grocer, and stand bareheaded at the carriage door of an alderman's lady. My mother, I am sorry to say, abetted my natural aversion from trade and sent me to Saint Paul's School to learn Latin, Greek, and the mathematicks that I might be qualified to separate myself from the class to which unhappily she was degraded and that she might recover in her child the pride she had lost in her husband. My abilities were not despicable, my ambition was restless, and my progress in my studies was therefore respectable. I conceived a genuine admiration for the classick authors ; I was genuinely moved by the majesty of Homer and the felicity of expression in Horace. In due time I went to Oxford, and after the usual course there, in which I was not unsuccessful, I took Holy Orders and became a curate. When I was about eight-and-twenty I was presented with a College living in the village of A. about four miles from the county town of B. in the West of England. My parishioners

were the squire, a half-pay captain in the army, a retired custom-house surveyor who was supposed to be the illegitimate son of a member of parliament, and the surrounding farmers and labourers. All were grossly illiterate, but I soon observed that a common ignorance does not prevent, but rather tends to establish artificial distinctions. Inferiority by a single degree in the social scale becomes not only a barrier to intercourse, but a sufficient reason for contempt. The squire and his lady spent their days in vain attempts to secure invitations to my Lord's at the Abbey and revenged themselves by patronising the captain, who in his turn nodded to the surveyor but would on no account permit intimacy. The surveyor could not for his life have condescended to enter a farm-house, and yet was never weary of denouncing as intolerably stuck-up the behaviour of those above him. He consoled himself by the reflection that they were the losers, and that, poor creatures, their neglect of him was due to a lamentable misapprehension of the dignity of H.M. Custom-house Service. I can assure you I thought the comedy played at A. very ridiculous, and often laughed at it.

It was soon quite clear to me that if I was to live in peace I must take to myself a wife. The squire and the surveyor had daughters. The squire's would each have a hundred a-year apiece, a welcome addition to my small income. They were good-looking, and by repute were virtuous and easy of temper, but when I became acquainted with them I found that I must not expect from them any entertainment save the description of visits to the milliner, or schemes for parties, or the gossip of the country-side. I did not demand, *Mr. Rambler*, the critical acumen of Mrs. Montagu, or the erudition of Mrs. Carter, but I believe you will agree with me that a wife, and especially the wife of a clergyman and a scholar, should be able to read a page of Dr. Barrow's sermons without yawning, and should not drop Mr. Pope's *Iliad* or *Odyssey* in five minutes unless she happened to light upon some particularly exciting adventure. I therefore dismissed the thought of these young ladies, and the daughters of the surveyor were for the same reasons ineligible, with the added objection that if I chose one of them the squire and his family would never enter the church again.

One day I went over to B. to leave my

watch for repairs. I noticed a fishing-rod in the shop, and as I was fond of the sport I asked the watchmaker if it was his. He said that he generally went fishing when he could spare himself a holiday, and that he had just spent two days on the Avon. I was thinking of the Stratford river and foolishly inquired which Avon, forgetting the one near us.

'Our Avon,' he replied; 'our Avon, of course, sir; *the* Avon.

'"Proud of his adamants with which he shines
And glisters wide, as als of wondrous Bath."'

I did not recollect the lines, but discovered on inquiry that they were Spenser's, an author, I regret to say, whom I had not read. I was astonished that a person with a mechanical occupation who sat in a window from morning to night dissecting time-pieces should be acquainted with poetry, and I begged him to tell me something of his life. He was the son of a bookseller in Bristol who had been apprenticed to the celebrated Mr. Bernard Lintot. The father failed in business, and soon afterwards died leaving a widow and six children. My friend was then about fourteen years old. He had been

well educated, but his mother was compelled to accept the offer of a neighbour who took compassion on her, and he was brought up to the watchmaking trade in Bath. He had to work long hours and endure many hardships which it might be supposed would tend to repress the sallies of the most lively imagination, but some men are so constituted that adverse circumstances do but stimulate a search for compensation. So it was with him. In his leisure hours he studied not only horological science but the works of our great English authors.

I was so much attracted to the watchmaker that I often called on him, when I had no business with him. He had a wife and daughter, both of whom were his companions. Melissa, the daughter, was about nineteen. She was not beautiful according to the Grecian model, but her figure was elegant, there was depth in her eyes, and she was always dressed with simplicity and taste. She spoke correctly, and surprised me by the justness of her observations, not merely on local and personal matters, but upon subjects with which women of more exalted rank are not usually familiar. Admission had been refused to her by every school in Bath, but she had been taken in

charge by two elderly gentlewomen, distant relations of her grandfather, who had instructed her in the usual branches of polite learning, including French. I will content myself, *Mr. Rambler*, with informing you that I fell in love with Melissa, and that she did not discourage my attentions. I had not altogether overlooked the possibility of embarrassment at A., but my passion prevented the clear foresight of consequences. I have often found that evils which are imaginary will press upon me with singular vivacity, while those which may with certainty be deduced from any action are but obscurely apprehended, so that in fact intensity of colour is an indication of unreality. I must add that if the future had presented itself to me with prophetic distinctness, my love for Melissa was so great that I should not have hesitated. My frequent visits to B. had not passed unnoticed at A., and the reason was suspected. Hints were not wanting, and the custom-house surveyor told me a harrowing tale of a fellow-surveyor who had alienated all his friends and had been obliged to leave his house near Tower Hill because he had chosen to marry the daughter of a poor author who lived in Whitefriars. One day early in the morning

I was in B. and met the squire's young ladies with their mother. She was a very proud dame. Her maiden name was Bone, and her father had been a sugar-baker in Bristol, but this was not a retail trade, and she had often told me that she was descended from Geoffrey de Bohun, who was in the retinue of William the Conqueror and killed five Saxons with his own hand at the battle of Hastings. Her children, she bade me observe, had inherited the true Bohun ears, as shown in an engraving she possessed of a Bohun tomb in Normandy. I walked with the party up the High Street, and had not gone far when I saw Melissa coming towards us. O, *Mr. Rambler*, can I utter it! She approached us, she knew that I must have recognised her, but I turned my head towards a shop-window and called my companions' attention to the display of silks and satins. After Melissa had passed, my lady asked me if that was not the watchmaker's daughter and whether I knew anything about her. I replied that I believed it was, and that I had heard she was a respectable young woman. My lady remarked that she had understood that she was virtuous, but that she had been unbecomingly brought up, and considered

herself superior to her position. Her ladyship confessed that she would not be surprised any day to hear that Miss —— had been obliged to leave B., for she had noticed that when a female belonging to the lower orders strove to acquire knowledge unsuitable to her station, the consequence was often ruin. It is almost incredible—I was silent!—but when I reached home I was overcome with shame and despair. This then was all that my love was worth; this was my esteem for intelligence and learning; and I was the man who had thanked God I was not as my neighbours at A.! If in the beginning I had deliberately resolved that it would be a mistake to ally myself with Melissa's family because my usefulness might be diminished, something might have been pleaded on my behalf, but I was without excuse. I had sacrificed Melissa to no principle, but to detestable vulgar cowardice. It was about two hours after noon when I returned, and in my confusion a note from Melissa which lay upon my table was not at once noticed. It had been written the day before, and it tenderly upbraided me because I had been absent for a whole week. Enclosed was a copy of verses by Sir Philip Sidney beginning, 'My true love hath my

heart.' I mounted my horse again, and in less than half an hour was in B. I flew to Melissa. She received me in silence, but without rebuke. Indeed, before she had time for a word, I had knelt at her feet and had covered my face with her hands. On my way through the town I had seen my lady with her children, and one or two fashionably-dressed women, friends who lived in B. My lady was completing her purchases. I implored Melissa immediately to come out with me. She was astonished and hesitated, but my impetuosity was so urgent that she feared to refuse, and without any explanation I almost dragged her into the street. On the opposite side I descried my lady and her party. I crossed over, took Melissa's arm in mine, came close to them face to face, bowed, and then passed on. We then recrossed the road and turned into Melissa's house. I looked back and saw that they were standing still, stricken with astonishment. We went into the little parlour: nobody was there. Melissa threw her arms round my neck, and happier tears were never shed. In all the long years which have now gone by since that memorable day I have never had to endure from that divine creature a word or a hint which

even the suspicion of wounded self-respect could interpret as a reproach.

We were married at B. The custom-house surveyor never entered his parish church again, but went over to B. once every Sunday. He wrote me a letter to say that it was with much regret that he left the church of his own village, but that it was no longer possible to derive any edification from the services there. The captain remained, but discontinued his civilities. The squire informed me that as I was still a priest and possessed authority to administer the holy sacraments he should continue his attendance, but that of course all personal intercourse must cease. I expected that the common people would have been confirmed in their attachment to me, but the opinion of the little village butcher was that I had disgraced myself, and the farmers and labourers would not even touch their hats to my wife when they met her. However, we did not care, and in time it was impossible even to the squire not to recognise her tact, manners, and sense. Her father had constructed an ingenious sun-dial which he had placed on the front of his shop. The great Mr. Halley was staying with Mr. M., who lives about five miles from B., and seeing

the dial when he was in the town, called on my father-in-law, and was so much struck with him that he obtained permission to invite him to dinner. There the squire met him and was obliged to sit opposite him, amazed to hear him converse on equal terms with Mr. Halley and his host, and to discover that he knew how to behave with decency. Hostility continued to wear away. Few people are endowed with sufficient perseverance to continue a quarrel unless the cause is constantly renewed.

My betrayal of Melissa has not been altogether without profit. I had imagined myself morally superior to my parishioners, and if I had put the question to myself I should have said with confidence that it was impossible that there should exist in me a weakness I had never suspected, one which every day moved me to laughter or to scorn. But, sir, I now feel how true it is that in our immortal poet's words, 'Man, proud man, is most ignorant of what he 's most assured, his glassy essence.' I hope you will pardon a reference to sacred history: I understand how the Apostle Peter came to deny his Lord. A few minutes before the dreadful crime was committed he would have con-

sidered himself as incapable of it as he was of the sale of his Master for money or of that damning kiss, and a few minutes afterwards he would have suffered death for His sake. This, *Mr. Rambler*, is the lesson which induced me to write to you. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall; and indeed he may take all heed and yet will fall, unless Divine Providence mercifully catches him and holds him up.

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHORESS OF 'JUDITH CROWHURST'

YOU have asked me to tell you all about *Judith Crowhurst.* I will tell you something more and begin at the beginning. You will remember that Miss Hardman said to Mrs. Pryor, Mrs. Hardman's governess: 'WE need the imprudences, extravagances, mistakes and crimes of a certain number of fathers to sow the seed from which WE reap the harvest of governesses. The daughters of tradespeople, however well educated, must necessarily be under-bred, and as such unfit to be inmates of OUR dwellings, or guardians of OUR children's minds and persons. WE shall ever prefer to place those about OUR offspring, who have been born and bred with somewhat of the same refinement as OURSELVES.' I was one of those unhappy women who, mercifully for the upper classes, inherit manners and misery in order that the children of these superior creatures may not put an 'r' at the end of 'idea' and may

learn how to sit down in a chair with propriety. My father was a clergyman holding a small country living. He died when I was five-and-twenty, and I had to teach in order to earn my bread. I obtained a tolerably good situation, but at the end of two years I was informed that, although a clergyman's daughter would 'do very well' so long as her pupils were quite young, it was now time that they should be handed over to a lady who had been accustomed to Society. I had become thoroughly weary of my work. I was not enthusiastic to instruct girls for whom I did not care. I suppose that if I had been a born teacher, I should have been as happy with the little Hardmans as I was in the nursery with my youngest sister now dead. I should not have said to myself, as I did every morning, 'What does it matter?' In my leisure moments and holidays during those two years I had written a novel. I could supply conversation and description, but it was very difficult to invent a plot, and still more difficult to invent one which of itself would speak. I had collected a quantity of matter of all kinds before I began, and then I cast about for a frame in which to fit it. At last I settled that my

hero, if hero he could be called, should fall in love with a poor but intelligent and educated girl. He had a fortune of about two thousand pounds a year, nearly the whole of which he lost through the defalcations of a brother, whose creditors received about five shillings in the pound. He felt that the fair name of his family was stained, and he was consumed with a passion to repay his brother's debts and to recover possession of the old house and land which had been sold. He went abroad, worked hard, and met with a lady who was rich whom he really admired. His love for his betrothed had been weakened by absence, the engagement, for some trifling reason, was broken off, and he married the heiress. At the end of five years he returned to England, discharged every liability, and in two years more was the owner of his birthplace. The marriage, alas! was unhappy. There was no obtrusive fault in his wife, but he did not love her. She could not understand his resolution to take upon himself his brother's debts, and she thought the price he paid for the house was excessive, as indeed it was. She was a good manager, but without imagination. He was rejoicing, in her presence, one spring morning that he

had been wakened by the clamour of the rooks with which he had been familiar ever since he was a boy, and her reply was that an estate equal in value to his own and possessing a bigger rookery had been offered him for less money by one-third than he had thrown away. Unfortunately it is not in management or morality that we crave companionship. It is in religion and in the deepest emotions that we thirst for it. Gradually he became wretched, and life was almost unbearable. She took no pleasure in the ancient place and its beautiful garden, he never asked her to admire them, and there was neither son nor daughter to inherit his pious regard. At this point I was obliged to introduce the *Deus ex machina*, and the wife died. The widower sought out his first love; she had never wavered in her affection to him; they were married, had children, and were happy.

My tale was a youthful blunder. It was not really a tale. I introduced, in order to provide interest, all sorts of accessories—aunts, parsons, gamekeepers, nurses, a fire and some hairbreadth escapes, but they were none of them essential and they were all manufactured. The only parts not worthless were those which were autobiographical.

One of them I remember very well, although my MS. was burnt long ago. I believed then that Nature is not merely beautiful, but that she can speak words which we can hear if we listen devoutly, and that if personality has any meaning she is personal,

'The guide, the guardian of the heart and soul.'

Towards the end of an autumn afternoon I had rambled up to the pillar which was a landmark to seven counties. It was wet during the morning, but at five o'clock the rain ceased and a long, irregular line of ragged cloud, dripping here and there, stretched itself above the opposite hills from east to west. Underneath it was a border of pale-golden, open sky, and below was the sea. The hills hid it, but I knew it was there. I was hushed and reassured. When I got home I transferred my emotion to my deserted heroine, and tears blotted the paper. But it was a mere episode, without connection and, in fact, an obstruction.

I sent my manuscript to a publisher and need hardly say that it was returned as unsuitable. I tried two others, but with no success. The third enclosed a copy of his reader's opinion. Here it is :—

'. . . is obviously a first attempt. It evinces some power in passages, but the characters lack distinction and are limited by ordinary conventional rules. I cannot recommend it to you for its own sake, and there is no prospect in it of anything better. The author might be capable of short stories for a religious magazine. It is singular that Miss C.'s *Mariana*, which you also sent me, should be on somewhat the same lines, but Mariana, his first love, is seduced by the man who forsakes her and, in the end, marries her as his second wife. During his first marriage his intimacy with Mariana continues and Miss C. thereby has an opportunity, which she used with much power, for realistic scenes, that I believe will prove attractive. I had no hesitation therefore in advising you to purchase *Mariana*, although the plot is crude.' I could not take the publisher's hint. I put my papers back into my box and obtained another situation. In about a twelvemonth, notwithstanding my disappointment, I was unable to restrain myself from trying again. I fancied that I might be able to project myself into actual history and appropriate it. I had been much attracted to Mary Tudor, and I had studied everything about her on which I could lay

my hands. I did not love her, but I pitied her profoundly, and the Holbein portrait of her seemed to me to indicate a terrible and pathetic secret. I cannot, however, give a complete explanation of her fascination for me. It is impossible to account for the resistless magnetism with which one human being draws another. The elements are too various and are compounded with too much subtlety. Bitter Roman Catholic as Mary was, I wished I could have been one of the ladies of her court, that I might have offered my heart to her and might have wept with her in her sorrow. But my intense feeling for a picture of the Queen was no qualification to paint the original, and although I strove to keep close to facts she insensibly became myself. I was altogether stopped when I happened to meet with Aubrey de Vere's *Mary Tudor* and Tennyson's *Queen Mary*.

Soon afterwards I read *Jane Eyre* again, and was more than ever astonished at it. It is not to be classed; it is written not by a limited human personality but by Nature herself. The love in it is too great for creatures who are 'even as the generations of leaves'; the existence of two mortals does not account for it. There is an irresistible sweep in it like that of the Atlantic

Ocean in a winter's storm hurling itself over the western rocks of Scilly. I do not wonder that people were afraid of the book and that it was cursed. The orthodox daughter of a country parson broke conventional withes as if they were cobwebs. *Jane Eyre* is not gross in a single word, but its freedom is more complete than that of a licentious modern novel. Do you recollect St. John Rivers says to Jane: 'Try to restrain the disproportionate fervour with which you throw yourself into commonplace home pleasures. Don't cling so tenaciously to ties of the flesh; save your constancy and ardour for an adequate cause; forbear to waste them on trite, transient objects. Do you hear, Jane?'

She replies—'Yes; just as if you were speaking Greek. I feel I have adequate cause to be happy, and I *will* be happy. Good-bye!'

Therein speaks the worshipper of the Sun.

Do you also recollect that voice in the night from Rochester? She breaks from St. John, goes up to her bedroom and prays. 'In my way—a different way to St. John's, but effective in its own fashion. I seemed to penetrate very near a Mighty Spirit; and my soul rushed out in gratitude at His feet. I rose from the thanksgiving—took a resolve

—and lay down, unscared, enlightened—eager but for the daylight.' The Mighty Spirit, who was Jane Eyre's God, had directed her not to go to India as St. John's bride to save souls from damnation by conversion to Jehovah, but to set off that very day to Rochester at Thornfield Hall.

Consider also how inseparably the important incidents in *Jane Eyre* are linked with one another and with character. Jane refused Rochester at first and St. John finally. She could not possibly do otherwise. But I must stop. You did not ask for an essay on Charlotte Brontë. Suffice it to say that when I had finished *Jane Eyre* I said to myself that I would not write any more. Nor did I ever attempt fiction again. *Judith Crowhurst* is a plain, true story, altered a little in order to prevent recognition. I knew her well. There is no suffering in any stage tragedy equal to that of the unmarried woman who is well brought up, with natural gifts above those of women generally, living on a small income, past middle-age, and unable to work. It is not the suffering which is acute torture ending in death, but worse, the black, moveless gloom of the second floor in Hackney or

Islington. Almost certainly she has but few friends, and those she has will be occupied with household or wage-earning duties. She is afraid of taking up their time; she never calls without an excuse. What is she to do? She cannot read all day, and, if she could, what is the use of reading? Poets and philosophers do not touch her case; descriptions of moonlit seas, mountains, moors, and waterfalls darken by contrast the view of the tiles and chimneys from her own window. Ideas do not animate or interest her, for she never has a chance of expressing them and, lacking expression, they are indistinct. Her eyes wander down page after page of her book, but she is only half-conscious. Religion, such as it is now, gives no help. It is based on the necessity of forgiveness for some wrong done and on the notion of future salvation. She needs no forgiveness unless she takes upon herself a burden of artificial guilt. She rather feels she has to forgive—whom or what she does not know. The heaven of the churches and chapels is remote, unprovable, and cannot affect her in the smallest degree. There is no religion for her and such as she, excepting that Catholic Faith of one article only—*The clods of the valley shall be sweet*

unto him. As I have said, I knew Judith Crowhurst well, and after she was dead I wrote her biography, because I believed there are thousands like her in London alone. I hoped that here and there I might excite sympathy with them. We sympathise when we sit in a theatre overpowered by stage agony, but a truer sympathy is that which may require some effort, pity for common, dull, and deadly trouble that does not break out in shrieks and is not provided with metre and scenery.

You were kind enough to get *Judith Crowhurst* published for me, and it has had what is called a 'success,' but I doubt if it will do any good. People devour books, but, when they have finished one, they never ask themselves what is to be done. It is immediately followed by another on a different subject, and reading becomes nothing but a pastime or a narcotic. *Judith* may be admired, but it is by those who will not undergo the fatigue of a penny journey in an omnibus to see their own Judith, perhaps nearly related to them, and will excuse themselves because she is not entertaining.

I was asked the other day if I was not proud of some of the reviews. Good God!

I would rather have been Alice Ayres,[1] and have died as she died, than have been famous as the author of the *Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*, or *Hamlet*. She is now forgotten and sleeps in an obscure grave in some London cemetery. No! there will be nothing more. I have said all I had to say.

[1] On the 24th April 1885 a fire broke out in an oilmonger's house in the Borough. The inmates were the oilmonger, his wife, four children, and Alice, the servant-of-all-work. She came to the window as soon as the alarm was raised and shouted for help. Before the fire brigade arrived the whole building was in flames. The people in the street called to her to jump and held out clothes to break her fall, but she went back and presently reappeared dragging a feather bed with her, which she pushed out. It was instantly extended below, and Alice fetched one of the children and threw it most carefully down. It was saved, and two other children also were saved by her in the same way. By this time it was evident that the suffocating fumes were beginning to affect her, for her aim with the last two was not steady. The crowd implored her to leap, but it was too late. She could not make a proper spring and fell on the ground. Five minutes afterwards the engines and fire-escape appeared. She was picked up and died in Guy's Hospital. I begged her portrait from her brother. It is not remarkable. That, perhaps, is the best thing that can be said about it. It is a pleasant, brave face—a face that you might see a dozen times on a Sunday afternoon.—M. R.

CLEARING-UP AFTER A STORM IN JANUARY

A WESTERLY storm of great strength had been blowing all day, shaking the walls of the house and making us fear for the chimneys. About four o'clock, although the wind continued very high, the clouds broke, and moved in a slow, majestic procession obliquely from the north-west to the south-east. Here and there small apertures revealed the undimmed heaven behind. Immense, rounded projections reared themselves from the main body, and flying, ragged fragments, apparently at a lower level, fled beside and before them. These fragments of lesser density showed innumerable tints of bluish grey from the darkest up to one which differed but little from the pure sky-blue surrounding them. Just after the sun set a rosy flush of light spread almost instantaneously up to the zenith and in an instant had gone. Low down in the west was a long, broadish bar

of orange light, crossed by the black pines on the hill half a mile away. Their stems and the outline of each piece of foliage were as distinct as if they were but a hundred yards distant. Half the length of the field in front of me lay a small pool full to its grassy margin. It reflected with such singular fidelity the light and colour above it that it seemed itself to be an original source of light and colour. Of all the sights to be seen in this part of the world none are more strangely and suggestively beautiful than the little patches of rain or spring water in the twilight on the moorland or meadows. Presently the wind rose again, and a rain-squall followed. It passed, and the stars began to come out, and Orion showed himself above the eastern woods. He seemed as if he were marching through the moonlit scud which drove against him. How urgent all the business of this afternoon and evening has been, and yet what it meant who could say? I was like a poor man's child who, looking out from the cottage window, beholds with amazement a great army traversing the plain before him with banners and music and knows nothing of its errand.

THE END OF THE NORTH WIND

FOR about six weeks from the middle of February we had bitter northerly winds. The frost was not very severe, but the wind penetrated the thickest clothing and searched the house through and through. The shrubs, even the hardiest, were blackened by its virulence. There was scarcely any sunshine, and every now and then a gloomy haze, like the smoke in London suburbs, invaded us. The rise and fall of the barometer meant nothing more than a variation in the strength of the polar current. Growth was nearly arrested, although one morning I found three primroses in a sheltered hollow. Never had the weather seemed more hopeless than towards the close of March. On the last evening of the month the sky was curiously perplexed and agitated notwithstanding there was little movement in the air above or below. Next morning the change had come. The wind had backed to the south, and a storm from the Channel was raging

with torrents of warm rain. O the day that followed! Massive April clouds hung in the air. How much the want of visible support adds to their charm! One enormous cloud, with its base nearly on the horizon, rose up forty-five degrees or so towards the zenith. Its weight looked tremendous, but it floated lightly in the blue which encompassed it. Towards the centre it was swollen and dark, but its edges were dazzling white. While I was watching it, it went away to the east and partly broke up. A new cloud, like and not like, succeeded it. . . . I followed the lane, stopped for a few minutes at a corner where the grassy road-margin widens out near the tumble-down barn, looked over the gate westward across the valley to the hills beyond, and then went down to the brook that winds along the bottom. It runs in a course which it has cut for itself, and is flanked on either side by delicately-carved miniature cliffs of yellow sandstone overhung with broom and furze. It was full of pure glittering moor-water, which seemed to add light to the stones in its bed, so brilliant was their colour. It fell with incessant, rippling murmur over its little ledges, gathering itself up into pools between each, and so it went on

to the mill-pond a mile away. Close to me a blackbird was building her nest. She moved when I peeped at her, but presently returned. Her back was struck by the warm sun and was glossy in its rays. A scramble of half a mile up a rough track brought me to the common, and there, thirty miles distant, lay the chalk downs, unsubstantial, a light-blue mist.

Youth with its heat in the blood may be more capable of exultation at this season, but to the old man it brings the sounder hope and deeper joy.

ROMNEY MARSH

'Proceeding from a source of untaught things'
(*Prelude* xiii. 310)

HERE is Appledore; over there is Romney Marsh. The sky has partly cleared after heavy, south-westerly rain. On the horizon where the sea lies the clouds are in a line, and the air is so clear that their edges are sharp against the blue. Nearer to me they are slowly dissolving, re-forming, and moving eastwards, and their shadows are crossing the wide grassy plain on which in the distance Lydd Church is just discernible. I can report something of those greys and that azure, but the best part of what is before me will not outline itself to me. Still less can I shape it in speech. Necessity, majestic inevitable movement, the folly of heat and hurry, all this emerges and again is blended in the simple unity of transcendent loveliness. But beyond there is something so close, so

precious! and yet elusive of every effort to grasp it.

She came to meet me from the line
  Where lies the ocean miles away;
And now she's close; she must be mine:
  I wait the word that she must say.

The magic word is not for me:
  The vision fades, and far and near
The west wind stirs the grassy sea
  In whispers to the watching ear.

AXMOUTH

A TRUE Devonshire village, sloping upwards from the Axe. The cottages are thatched, and the walls are of cobbles, plastered. A little gurgling stream runs down the village street, and over the stream each cottage on its bank has a little bridge. The poor brook is much troubled, unhappily, by cabbage leaves and the like defilement, and does its best to oversweep them and carry them away, but does not quite succeed. In a few minutes, however, it will be in the Axe, and in half an hour it will be in the pure sea. A farmhouse stands at the end of the village with a farmyard of deep manure and black puddles coming up to the side-door. The church, once interesting, has been restored with more than usual barbarity, blue slates, villa ridge-tiles, the vulgarest cheap pavement, tawdry decorations and furniture, such as are supplied to churchwardens by ecclesiastical tradesmen. But the tower is still grey, and has

looked unchanged over the the Axe estuary for hundreds of years. Turning up from the main street is a Devonshire lane eight feet wide or thereabouts. It ascends to a farm on the hillside, and its steep high banks are covered with ferns and primroses. A tiny brooklet twitters down by its side. At the top of the down is a line of old hawthorns blown slantingly by south-west storms into a close, solid mass of shoots and prickles. They are dwarfed in their struggle, but have thick trunks, many of them covered with brilliant yellow lichen.

For miles and miles before it comes to Axmouth, and above Axminster, the Axe flows in singular loops, often returning almost upon itself, reluctant to quit the lovely land of its birth, youth, and maturity; but now it is straighter, for it is in the lowlands and feels the tide. Flocks of seagulls wade or float in it. It passes quietly under its last bridge, but beyond it is confronted by a huge shingle barrier. Sweeping alongside it, it suddenly turns at right angles, cuts its way through with an exulting rush, holds back for a few yards the sea waves that ripple against it, and is then lost.

THE PREACHER AND THE SEA

THIS morning as I walked by the sea, a man was preaching on the sands to about a dozen people, and I stopped for a few minutes to listen. He told us that we were lying under the wrath of God, that we might die at any moment, and that if we did not believe in the Lord Jesus we should be damned everlastingly. 'Believe in the Lord,' he shouted, 'believe or you will be lost; you can do nothing of yourselves; you must be saved by grace alone, by blood, without blood is no remission of sins. Some of you think, no doubt, you are good people, and you may be, as the world goes, but your righteousness is as filthy rags, you are all wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; the devil will have you if you don't turn to the Lord, and you will go down to the bottomless, brimstone pit, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth for ever and ever. Believe,' he roared, 'now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.'

Sunny clouds lay in the blue above him, and at his feet summer waves were breaking peacefully on the shore, the sound of their soft, musical plash filling up his pauses and commenting on his texts.

CONVERSION

In 1802 Lady B. was living at M—— Park. She was a proud, handsome, worldly woman about fifty-five years old, a widow with no children, but she had a favourite nephew who was at the Park for the larger part of the year and was the heir to her property. She had been gay in her youth, was the leader of society in her county, and when she passed middle life still followed the hounds. She was a good landlord, respected and even beloved by her tenantry, and a staunch Tory in politics. The new evangelical school of Newton and Romaine she detested bitterly, as much in fact as she detested Popery. The nephew, however, came under Newton's influence and was converted. His aunt was in despair. She could not conquer her affection for him, but she almost raved when she reflected that the inheritor of her estates was a pious Methodist, as she called him. She had a good-looking, confidential maid who had

lived with her for years. In one of her fits she told this maid that she would give half of what she possessed if her nephew were like other young men. 'I don't want him to be a sot or to gamble away my money,' she cried, 'but there 's not much else I should mind if he were but a man.'

A few days afterwards she spoke to her maid again. 'Look you here, Jarvis, I shall go distracted. This morning he began to speak to me about my soul—the brave boy that he used to be, talking of my soul to *me*! Listen to what I tell you and be reasonable. I know perfectly well, and so do you, that before he took up with this sickening cant he was in love with you and you were in love with him. I saw it all and said nothing. I understand there 's no more flirting now. Ah, well, his blood is red yet; I 've not forgotten what five-and-twenty is, and he 'll come if you whistle. You can't marry him, of course, but you can and shall live comfortably afterwards for all that, and when he has done what all other young fellows do there will be an end to the prayer-meetings.'

The girl was a little staggered, but after a time her mistress's suggestion ceased to shock her, for the nephew was a handsome fellow capable of raising passion in a woman.

What the aunt had said was really true. She now threw the girl in his way. She was sent to him with messages when he was alone, and one evening when he had gone over to a prayer-meeting in the town about two miles away, she was directed to go there on an errand, to contrive to be late, and to return with him. She had half an hour to spare and was curious to know what the prayer-meeting was like. She stood close to the inner door, which was slightly ajar, and heard her master praying earnestly. He rose and spoke to the little congregation for five minutes. When he had finished she started for home, and he came up with her before she had passed the last house. It was nearly dark, but he recognised her by a light from a window, and asked her what she was doing in the town at that hour. She excused herself by unexpected detention, and they went on together. About half a mile further at the top of the hill was the stile of the pathway that was a short cut to the park. From that point there was an extensive view over the plain eastwards, and the rising moon was just emerging from a line of silvered clouds. They were both struck with the beauty of the spectacle and stood still gazing at it.

Suddenly she dropped on her knees and with violent sobbing called upon God to help her. He lifted her up, and when she was calmer she told him everything. They went on their way in silence. Now comes the remarkable part of the story. It was he who would have been the tempter and she had saved him. When they reached the Park he found his aunt ill, and in a fortnight she was dead. In less than two years nephew and maid were married. His strict evangelicalism relaxed a little, but they were both faithful to their Friend. Lovers also they were to the last, and they died in the same month after each of them had passed seventy-five years.

I fancy I read a long while ago somewhere in Wesley's *Journal* that an attempt was made to ruin him or one of his friends with a woman, but I think she was a bad woman. If there is anything of the kind in the *Journal* it shows that Lady B.'s plot is not incredible.

JULY

It is a cool day in July, and the shaded sunlight slowly steals and disappears over the landscape. There are none of those sudden flashes which come when the clouds are more sharply defined and the blue is more intense. I have wandered from the uplands down to the river. The fields are cleared of the hay, and the bright green of the newly mown grass increases the darkness of the massive foliage of the bordering elms. The cows are feeding in the rich level meadows and now and then come to the river to drink. It is overhung with alders, and two or three stand on separate little islands held together by roots. The winter floods biting into the banks have cut miniature cliffs, and at their base grow the forget-me-not, the willow-herb, and flowering rush. A brightly-plumaged bird, too swift to be recognised — could it be a kingfisher? — darts along the margin of the stream and disappears in its black

shadows. The wind blows gently from the west: it is just strong enough to show the silver sides of the willow leaves. The sound of the weir, although so soft, is able to exclude the clacking of the mill and all intermittent, casual noises. For two hours it has filled my ears and brought a deeper repose than that of mere silence. It is not uniform, for the voices of innumerable descending threads of water with varying impulses can be distinguished, but it is a unity. Myriads of bubbles rise from the leaping foam at the bottom, float away for a few yards and then break.

It is the very summit of the year, the brief poise of perfection. In two or three weeks the days will be noticeably shorter, the harvest will begin, and we shall be on our way downwards to autumn, to dying leaves and to winter.

A SUNDAY MORNING IN NOVEMBER

THE walk from the high moorland to the large pond or lake lies through a narrow grassy lane. About half-way down it turns sharply to the left; in front are the bluish-green pine woods. Across the corner of them, confronting me, slants a birch with its white bark and delicate foliage, light-green and yellow in relief against the sombre background. Fifty yards before I reach the wood its music is perceptible, something like the tones of an organ heard outside a cathedral. In another minute the lane enters: it is dark, but the ruddy stems catch the sun, and in open patches are small beeches responding to it with intense golden-brown. Along the edge of the path, springing from the mossy bank they grow to a greater height. A pine has pushed

itself between the branches of one of them as if on purpose to show off the splendour of its sister's beauty. It is stiller than it was outside; the murmur descends from aloft. There was a frost last night and the leaves will soon fall. A beech leaf detaches itself now and then and flutters peacefully and waywardly to the ground, careless whether it finds its grave in the bracken or on the road where it will be trodden underfoot. The bramble is beginning to turn to blood. It is strange that leaves should show such character. Here is a corner on which there are not two of the same tint, but they spring from the same root, and the circumstances of light and shade under which they have developed are almost exactly similar.

It is eleven o'clock, and with the mounting sun the silence has become complete save when it is broken by the heavy, quick flap of the wood-pigeon or the remonstrance of a surprised magpie. Service is just beginning all over England in churches and the chapels belonging to a hundred sects. In the village two miles away the Salvation Army drum is beating, but it cannot penetrate these recesses. Stay! a faint vibration from it comes over the hill, but now it has

gone. A fox, unaware of any human being, walks from one side of the lane to the other, stopping in the middle. There is a breath of wind and the low solemn song begins again above me.

UNDER BEACHY HEAD: DECEMBER

AT the top of the hill the north-westerly wind blows fresh, but here under the cliffs the sun strikes warm as in June. There is not a cloud in the sky, and behind me broken, chalk pinnacles intensely white rise into the clear blue, which is bluer by their contrast. In front lies the calm, light-sapphire ocean with a glittering sun-path on it broadening towards the horizon. All recollection of bare trees and dead leaves has gone. The tide is drawing down and has left bare a wide expanse of smooth untrodden sand through which ridges run of chalk rock black with weed. The sand is furrowed by little rivulets from the abandoned pools above, and at its edge long low waves ripple over it, flattening themselves out in thin sheets which invade one another with infinitely complex, graceful curves. I look southward: there is nothing between

me and the lands of heat but the water. It unites me with them.

It is wonderful that winter should suddenly abdicate and summer resume her throne. On a morning like this there is no death, the sin of the world is swallowed up; theological and metaphysical problems cease to have any meaning. Men and books make me painfully aware of my littleness and defects, but here on the shore in silence complete save for the music of the ebbing sea, they vanish.

When I am again in London and at work the dazzling light will not be extinguished, and will illuminate the dreary darkness of the city.

24TH DECEMBER

My housekeeper and her husband have begged for a holiday from this morning till Boxing-day, and I could not refuse. I can do without them for so short a time. I might have spent the Christmas with one of my children, but they live far away and travelling is now irksome to me. I was seventy years old a month past. Besides, they are married and have their own friends, of whom I know nothing. I have locked the door of my cottage and shall walk to No-man's Corner.

It is a dark day; the sky is covered evenly with a thick cloud. There is no wind except a breath now and then from the north-east. It is not a frost, but it is cold, and a thick mist covers the landscape. It is no thicker in the river bottom than on the hills; it is everywhere the same. The field-paths are in many places a foot deep in mud, for the autumn has been wet. They are ploughing the Ten Acres, and the plough is going

along the top ridge so that horses and men are distinctly outlined, two men and four horses, but the pace is slow, for the ground is very heavy. I can just hear the ploughman talking to his team. The upturned earth is more beautiful in these parts than I have seen it elsewhere—a rich, reddish brown, for there is iron in it. The sides of the clods which are smoothed by the ploughshare shine like silver even in this dull light. I pass through the hop-garden. The poles are stacked and a beginning has just been made with the weeds. A little further on is the farmhouse. It lies in the hollow and there is no road to it, save a cart-track. The nearest hard road is half a mile distant. The footpath crosses the farmyard. The house is whitewashed plaster and black-timbered, and surrounded by cattle-pens in which the oxen and cows stand almost up to their knees in slush. A motionless ox looks over the bar of his pen and turns his eyes to me and my dog as we pass. It is now twelve, and it is the dinner-hour. The horses have stopped work and are steaming with sweat under the hayrick. The men are sitting in the barn. Leaving the farmyard I go down to the brook which steals round the wood and stop for a few

minutes on the foot-bridge. I can hear the little stream in the gully about twenty feet below, continually changing its note, which nevertheless is always the same. In the wood not a leaf falls. O eternal sleep, death of the passions, the burial of failures, follies, bitter recollections, the end of fears, welcome sleep!

DREAMING

DURING the retreat from Moscow a French soldier was mortally wounded. His comrades tried to lift him into a waggon. 'No bandages, no brandy!' he cried; 'go, you cannot help me.' They hesitated, but seeing that he could not recover, and knowing that the enemy was hard upon them in pursuit, they left him. For half an hour he was alive and alone. The Emperor, whom he worshipped, was far away; his friends had fled; to remain would have been folly, and yet——! It was late in the afternoon and bitterly cold. He looked with dim and closing eyes over the vast, dreary, snowy and silent plain. What were the images which passed before them? Were they of home, of the Emperor and the retreating army, of the crucifix and the figure thereon? Who can tell? Death is preceded by thoughts which life cannot anticipate. Perhaps his herald was a simple longing to be at rest, joy at his approach blotting out

all bitterness and regret. Who can tell? But I dream and dream ; the dying, wintry day, the dark, heavily-clouded sky, the snow, and the blood. A Cossack came up and drove his lance through him.

OURSELVES

LORD BACON says that 'To be wise by rule and to be wise by experience are contrary proceedings; he that accustoms himself to the one unfits himself for the other.' It is singular how little attention, in the guidance of our lives, we pay to our own needs. It is a common falsehood of these times that all knowledge is good for everybody, the truth being that knowledge is good only if it helps us, and that if it does not help us it is bad. 'Whatever knowledge,' to quote from Bacon again, 'we cannot convert into food or medicine endangereth a dissolution of the mind and understanding.' We ought to turn aside from what we cannot manage, no matter how important it may seem to be. David refused Saul's helmet of brass and coat of mail. If he had taken the orthodox accoutrements and weapons he would have been encumbered and slain. He killed Goliath with the rustic sling and stone. No doubt if we determine to be ignorant of

those things with which the world thinks it necessary that everybody should be familiar we shall be thought ill-educated, but our very ignorance will be a better education, provided it be a principled ignorance, than much which secures a local examination certificate or a degree. At the same time, if any study fits us, it should be pursued unflaggingly. We must not be afraid of the imputation of narrowness. Our subject will begin to be of most service to us when we have passed the threshold and can think for ourselves. If we devote ourselves, for example, to the works and biography of any great man, the pleasure and moral effect come when we have read him and re-read him and have traced every thread we can find, connecting him with his contemporaries. It is then, and then only, that we understand him and he becomes a living soul. Flesh and blood are given by details.

We are misled by heroes whom we admire, and the greater the genius the more perilous is its influence upon us if we allow it to be a dictator to us. It is really of little consequence to me what a saint or philosopher thought it necessary to do in order to protect and save himself. It is myself that I have to protect and save.

Every man is prone to lean on some particular side and on that side requires special support. Every man has particular fears and troubles, and it is against these and not against the fears and troubles of others that he must provide remedies. A religion is but a general direction, and the real working Thirty-nine Articles or Assembly's Catechism each one of us has to construct on his own behalf.

A not insignificant advantage of loyalty to our Divine Director will be a more correct and generally a more lenient criticism of our fellow-creatures. We shall cease to judge them by standards which are not applicable to them. Much that we might erroneously consider wrong we shall discern to be a necessary effort to secure stability or even to preserve sanity. We shall pardon deviation from the obvious path. The boat which crosses the river may traverse obliquely the direct line to the point for which it is making, and if we reflect that perhaps a strong current besets it we shall not call the steersman a fool.

THE RIDDLE

MEN had sinned against the gods, and had even denied their existence. Zeus had a mind to destroy them, but at last resolved to inflict on them a punishment worse than death. He sent Hermes to one of the chief cities with a scroll on which a few magic letters were written, and the wise men declared they contained a riddle. Its solution would bring immortal happiness. The whole human race, neglecting all ordinary pursuits, applied itself ceaselessly to the solution of the mystery. Professors were appointed to lecture on it, it was attacked on all sides by induction, deduction, and by flights of inspiration, but nobody was able to unravel it. At last a child, seeing the perplexity in which her father and mother were, took one of the copies of the scroll which were hung in all the public buildings of the city, and secretly set off to consult a distant oracle of Phœbus Apollo of which she had heard. She had to traverse thirsty

deserts, and not till she was nearly dead did she reach the shrine. She told her story and handed in her scroll to a priestess, who disappeared in an inner chamber. In a few minutes the temple of the Sun-god was filled with blazing light, the child prostrated herself on the floor, and she heard the words, *There is no riddle.* She lifted herself up, and, fortified with some food given her by the priestess, began her journey home. She was just able to struggle through the city gates and deliver the message before she fell down lifeless. It was not believed; the Secret, the Secret, everybody upheld it, the professors lectured, the mad inquisition and guesses continued, and the vengeance of Zeus is not yet satisfied.

AN EPOCH

I WAS no longer young: in fact I was well over sixty. The winter had been dark and tedious. For some reason or other I had not been able to read much, and I began to think there were signs of the coming end. Suddenly, with hardly any warning, spring burst upon us. Day after day we had clear, warm sunshine which deepened every contrast of colour, and at intervals we were blessed with refreshing rains. I spent most of my time out of doors on the edge of a favourite wood. All my life I had been a lover of the country, and had believed, if this is the right word, that the same thought, spirit, life, God, which was in everything I beheld, was also in me. But my creed had been taken over from books; it was accepted as an in-

tellectual proposition. Most of us are satisfied with this kind of belief, and even call it religion. We are more content the more definite the object becomes, no matter whether or not it is in any intimate relationship with us, and we do not see that the moment God can be named he ceases to be God.

One morning when I was in the wood something happened which was nothing less than a transformation of myself and the world, although I 'believed' nothing new. I was looking at a great, spreading, bursting oak. The first tinge from the greenish-yellow buds was just visible. It seemed to be no longer a tree away from me and apart from me. The enclosing barriers of consciousness were removed and the text came into my mind, *Thou in me and I in thee.* The distinction of self and not-self was an illusion. I could feel the rising sap; in me also sprang the fountain of life uprushing from its roots, and the joy of its outbreak at the extremity of each twig right up to the summit was my own: that which kept me apart was nothing. I do not argue; I cannot explain; it

will be easy to prove me absurd, but nothing can shake me. *Thou in me and I in thee.* Death! what is death? There is no death: *in thee* it is impossible, absurd.

BELIEF

He has vanished, the God of the Church
and the Schools:
He has gone for us all except children and
fools;
Where He dwelt is the uttermost limit of
cold,
And a fathomless depth is the Heaven of
old.

I turn from my books, and behold! I'm
aware
There's a girl in the room, just a girl over
there.
She stole in while I mused; and she watches
the verge
Of a low-lying cloud whence a star doth
emerge.

A touch on her shoulder; I whisper a
word,
One more, and I know that the heavenly
Lord

Still loves and rejoices His creatures to meet:
My faith still survives, for I kneel at her feet.

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY ON THE QUANTOCKS

Spring 18—.

WALKED from Holford to my lodgings on the hill. Never remember to have lived in such quietude. The cottage stands half a mile away from any house. Woke very early the next morning and went down to Alfoxden House, where Wordsworth and Dorothy lived a century ago. Here also came Coleridge. It was almost too much to remember that they had trodden those paths. I could hardly believe they were not there, and yet they were dead—such a strange overcoming sense of presence and yet of vanishedness.

A certain degree of ignorance is necessary for a summary essay on creatures of this order. The expression of Dorothy's soul is spread over large surfaces. Some people require much space and time, and the striking events of a life are often not those which

are most significant. It is in small, spontaneous actions and their reiteration that character plainly appears. After prolonged acquaintance with Dorothy we see that she was great and we love her reverentially and passionately. She could look at a beautiful thing for an hour without reflection, but absorbed in its pure beauty—a most rare gift. For how long can we watch a birch tree against the sky? Here are two extracts from her journal in the very place where I now am. They are dated 26th January and 24th February 1798, in the winter it will be noticed. 'Sat in the sunshine. The distant sheep-bells; the sound of the stream; the woodman winding along the half-marked road with his laden pony; locks of wool still spangled with the dew-drops; the blue-grey sea, shaded with immense masses of cloud, not streaked; the sheep glittering in the sunshine.' . . . 'Went to the hill-top. Sat a considerable time overlooking the country towards the sea. The air blew pleasantly around us. . . . Scattered farmhouses, half-concealed by green, mossy orchards; fresh straw lying at the doors; haystacks in the fields. Brown fallows; the springing wheat, like a shade of green over the brown earth; and the

choice meadow plots, full of sheep and lambs, of a soft and vivid green; a few wreaths of blue smoke, spreading along the ground; the oaks and beeches in the hedges retaining their yellow leaves; the distant prospect on the land side, islanded with sunshine; the sea, like a basin full to the margin; the dark, fresh-ploughed fields; the turnips, of a lively, rough green.' That bit about the farmhouses reminds me of two very early lines of Wordsworth which are a prophecy of his peculiar quality:—

'Calm is all nature as a resting wheel';

and

'By secret villages and lonely farms.'
(*first version.*)

The image in the first line looks rude and unpoetical, but will be felt by anybody who has strolled observantly through a farmyard —say on a Sunday summer afternoon—and has noticed a disused wheel leaning against a wall. Wordsworth shows himself not afraid of the commonplace. A great object may gain by comparison with one which is superficially lower or even mean—nature with a cart-wheel.

Went over the hills to Bicknoller—a sunny, hazy day—and the Bristol Channel was in a mist. The note of the cuckoo was unceasing. Down in the valley at Bicknoller the hedges and banks of the lanes are in the most ardent stage of spring. Everything is pressing forward with joyous impetuosity, and yet is satisfied with what it is at the present moment and is completely at rest in it. Along this path to Bicknoller the *Ancient Mariner* was begun. The most wonderful piece of criticism on record is perhaps that of Mrs. Barbauld on the poem. She objected to it because it had no moral. Coleridge replied: 'In my judgment the poem had too much; and the only, or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have no more moral than the Arabian Nights' tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well, and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up, and says he *must* kill the aforesaid merchant, *because* one of the date-shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son.'

To the first draft of *Youth and Age*, written in 1823, there is a little prose introduction, a reminiscence of the Quantocks, which is a lovely example of the way in which one sensation gains by description in terms of another. '. . . At earliest dawn . . . the first skylark . . . was a Song-Fountain, dashing up and sparkling to the Ear's eye, in full column or ornamented shaft of sound in the order of Gothic Extravaganza, out of sight, over the Cornfields on the descent of the Mountain on the other side—out of sight, tho' twice I beheld its mute shoot downward in the sunshine like a falling star of silver.'

Coleridge! Coleridge! How empty do the sweeping judgments passed on him appear if we recollect that by Wordsworth, Dorothy, Charles and Mary Lamb, he was honoured and fervently loved. If a man is loved by any human being condemnation is rash, and we ought at least to be silent.

Wandered about Holford. The apple-trees are in full blossom. One of them was

a particularly exquisite survival of youth in old age. Its head was a white-and-pink mass, but it leaned almost horizontally, battered and weather-worn.

Thunder off and on all day till the afternoon. A low grey mist covered the whole sky at five o'clock, and the landscape was uninteresting, but in ten minutes the mist thinned a little, so that the sun came through it and lighted up the torn vapour.

Went over to East Quantock's Head and came back across the hill. It was a dark day; the sky was overcast, and the moors were very lonely. The thought of London and other big cities over the horizon somewhat marred the solitude. Nevertheless there are the deserts of Arabia and Africa, the regions of the North and South Poles, the Ocean, and, encompassing the globe itself, silent, infinite space.

To Nether Stowey and Tom Poole's house. In the hideous church is a monument to him fairly appreciative, but dis-

figured by snobbism. 'His originality and grasp of mind,' says the inscription, 'counterbalanced the deficiencies of early education and secured him the friendship,' etc. His 'originality and grasp of mind'—his soul, that is to say, managed, when put in the scale, to turn it against those deficiencies which are made good to youths providentially directed to Eton and Oxford. According to the slab in the church, Poole died 8th September 1837, seventy-two years old. The house in which he lived in his later years is a pleasant place, but has been tortured into modern gentility. His revolving grate, which he turned round when he went out, has been replaced by an approved cast-iron 'register.' He was called 'Justice Poole' in the country round. Afterwards to Coleridge's cottage—small, somewhat squalid rooms. Pity, pity, almost to tears. The second edition of his poems was published while he was here in 1797. In a note added to *Religious Musings* in that edition he declares his belief in the Millennium; that 'all who in past ages have endeavoured to ameliorate the state of man, will rise and enjoy the fruits and flowers, the imperceptible seeds of which they had sown in their former life; and that the wicked will,

during the same period, be suffering the remedies adapted to their several bad habits.' This period is to be 'followed by the passing away of this earth, and by our entering the state of pure intellect; when all creation shall rest from its labours.' The 'coadjutors of God' in *Religious Musings* are Milton, Newton, Hartley, and Priestley. In the beginning of 1798 Coleridge was preaching at the Unitarian Chapel at Shrewsbury. But on the 13th November 1797, at half-past four in the afternoon (let us be particular in dating such an event), he and Dorothy and her brother began their walk over these Quantock hills, and *The Ancient Mariner* was born. These are the facts, and rash indeed would anybody be who should attempt to deduce anything from them. Of all foolish criticism there is none more foolish than that which treats the mental movement of men like Coleridge or Wordsworth as if it were in an imaginary straight line. Excepting lines 123-270, composed in the latter part of 1796, Coleridge wrote his contribution to *Joan of Arc* between 1794 and 1795. *The Rose* and *Kisses* were written in 1793, and *On a Discovery Made Too Late* in 1794. Could anybody, not knowing the dates, have

believed that these three poems last-named, if not written before the *Joan of Arc*, were contemporaneous with it? In the *Joan of Arc* Coleridge is immature and led astray by politics, religion, and philosophy, but in the three little poems where he has subjects akin to him he is perfect, and could have done nothing better ten years later. Still more remarkable, *Lewti*, in its earliest form, cannot have been written later than 1794, for it was originally addressed to Mary Evans, from whom Coleridge parted in December 1794. As an example of the survival of his poetic power take *Love's First Hope*, written probably in 1824:

> 'O fair is Love's first hope to gentle mind!
> As Eve's first star thro' fleecy cloudlet peeping;
> And sweeter than the gentle south-west wind,
> O'er willowy meads, and shadow'd waters creeping,
> And Ceres' golden field;—the sultry hind
> Meets it with brow uplift, and stays his reaping.'

Coleridge was indebted to Sir Philip Sidney for the third and fourth lines, excepting 'o'er willowy meads,' but these three words and the first and last two lines are his own. Not only does his genius survive, but emotion as pure and deep as

that of the Nether Stowey days or those preceding. There is no trace of the interval between them and those of 1824.

In the post-office at Kilve hangs an old trombone, a memento of the time when the village orchestra assisted in the service at the church. How well I remember those artists and their jealousies! The clarionet or 'clarnet,' as he called himself, caused much ill-feeling because he drowned the others, and the double-bass strove ineffectually to avenge himself. The churchyard yew is one of the largest I ever beheld—twenty feet in girth by measurement, four feet from the ground. A gay morning: heavy, white masses of clouds sailing over the hills; light most brilliant when the sun came out. How singularly beautiful is a definitely outlined white cloud when it is cut by the ridge of a hill!

Across the hills in a south-westerly storm of wind and rain to Bicknoller. A walk not to be forgotten: overcast sky, dark moors; clouds sweeping over them and obscuring them. I should not have found

my way if I had not lost it when I went to Bicknoller before. I then put three stones at the point where I afterwards discovered I had gone astray. These three stones saved me to-day.

Whitsunday morning: sat at the open window between five and six: the hills opposite lay in the light of the eastern sun. Bicknoller church and the little old village were beneath me. Perfect quietude, save for the bells of Stogumber church ringing a peal two miles away. Earth has nothing to give compared with this peace. The air was so still that delicious mingled scents floated up from the garden and fields below. It was one of those days on which every sense is satisfied, and no mortal imperfection appears. Took the *Excursion* out of doors after breakfast, and read *The Ruined Cottage.*

Much of the religion by which Wordsworth lives is very indefinite. Look at the close of this poem :—

> 'I well remember that those very plumes,
> Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall
> By mist and silent rain-drops silver'd o'er,
> As once I pass'd, did to my heart convey

So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and look'd so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which fill'd my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
The passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appear'd an idle dream, that could not live
Where meditation was. I turn'd away,
And walk'd along my road in happiness.'

Because this religion is indefinite it is not therefore the less supporting.

Why, by the way, did Wordsworth expunge from *Michael* these wonderful lines?

'In his thoughts there were obscurities,
Wonder, and admiration, things that wrought
Not less than a religion in his heart.'

Something like them had been said before, but they ought to have been retained.

The changes in the sky in this Quantock country are as sudden and strange as in Cumberland. During a walk from Cleeve Abbey to Bicknoller it rained in torrents till within half a mile of the end of my journey. All at once it ceased, and the uniform sheet of rain-cloud broke into loose ragged masses swirling in different direc-

tions and variously lighted, the sun almost shining through some of the clefts between them. Cleeve Abbey, lying in the trough of a green valley through which runs a stream, the cloister garth and the Abbot's seat at the end of it, are most impressive. Under the turf lie the dead monks. A place like this begets half-unconscious dreaming which issues in nothing and is not wholesome. It would be better employment to learn something about the history of the abbey and about its architecture.

Detached Quantock Notes.

Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds' singing,
Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
Save where your own imperious branches swinging,
Have made a solemn music of the wind.'

These lines from *France* were written by Coleridge when he was a little over twenty-five years old. In the combination of two gifts, music and meaning, he is hardly surpassable at his best by any poet. Not an atom of meaning is sacrificed to gain a

melody: in fact the melody adds to the meaning.

Here is another example showing how the poetic form with Coleridge is not a hindrance to expression, but aids it.

> Gentle woman, for thy voice remeasures
> Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures
> The things of Nature utter; birds or trees,
> Or moan of ocean-gale in weedy caves,
> Or where the stiff grass 'mid the heath-plant waves,
> Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze.'

His similitudes are not mere external comparisons; the objects compared become *modes* of unity. 'A brisk gale and the foam that peopled the *alive* [italics C.'s] sea, most interestingly combined with the number of white sea-gulls, that, repeatedly, it seemed as if the foam-spit had taken life and wing, and had flown up.'

The intimations which are but whispered, the Presences which are but half-disclosed, are those which we should intently obey. The coarsely obvious has its own strength.

> 'She went forth alone
> Urged by the indwelling angel-guide, that oft,

With dim inexplicable sympathies
Disquieting the heart, shapes out Man's course
To the predoomed adventure.'

Destiny of Nations.

Wordsworth's habit of spending so much time in the open air and with the humble people around him gives to what he says the value of experience, distinguishable totally from the ideas of the literary man, which may be brilliant, but do not agree with the sun, moon and stars, and turn out to be nothing when we ask is the thing really *so*.

Wordsworth's verses have been in the sun and wind. It is a test of good sane writing that we can read it out of doors.

If Wordsworth's love of clouds and mountains ended there it would be no better than the luxury of a refined taste. But it does not end there. It affects the whole of his relationships with men and women, and is therefore most practical.

In Wordsworth what we expect does not

come, but in its place the unexpected. In the twelfth book of the *Prelude* he tells us:

> There are in our existence spots of time,
> That with distinct pre-eminence retain
> A renovating virtue, whence, depressed
> By false opinion and contentious thought,
> Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight
> In trivial occupations, and the round
> Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
> Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
> A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
> That penetrates, enables us to mount,
> When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
> This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
> Among those passages of life that give
> Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how,
> The mind is lord and master—outward sense
> The obedient servant of her will.'

He then gives us one of these 'passages,' and what is it? A day when as a child he saw

> 'A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
> The beacon on the summit, and, more near,
> A girl, who bore a pitcher on her head,
> And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
> Against the blowing wind.'

It was, as he says, an 'ordinary sight,' but

> 'Colours and words that are unknown to man'

would have failed him

'To paint the visionary dreariness'

which invested what he saw.

Years afterwards, when he revisited the spot, the 'loved one at his side,' there fell on it

'A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam;
And think ye not with radiance more sublime
For these remembrances, and for the power
They had left behind? So feeling comes in aid
Of feeling, and diversity of strength
Attends us, if but once we have been strong.'

This was the experience, then, of 'distinct pre-eminence' in whose recollection his mind was 'nourished and invisibly repaired.' It is in such a moment that the soul's strength is shown; when common objects evoke what he calls the imagination, the reality, of which they are a suggestion. Although he expands here and elsewhere he does not elaborate. He stops where the fact ends and shuns abstractions.

'So taught, so trained, we boldly face
All accidents of time and place;
Whatever props may fail,
Trust in that sovereign law can spread
New glory o'er the mountain's head,
Fresh beauty through the vale.'

This is from *The Wishing-Gate Destroyed*, a late poem, not published till 1842, when Wordsworth was seventy-two years old. It is his Nicene and Apostles' Creed and Thirty-Nine Articles. Trust, with no credentials but its own existence, and yet they are indisputable.

'Is it that Man is soon deprest?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason.'
To the Daisy.

An example of Wordsworth's wisdom disclosing itself in his simplest pieces. For one sad conclusion to which the reason leads us, the uncontrolled, baseless procedure in the brain which we call thinking, but is really day-dreaming, leads us to a score. Reason on the whole is sanative.

'Blest Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will
Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts: whose eye
Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Wisdom exists not, nor the humbler skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
With patient care.'

Exist not. We are befooled by words. We conceive wisdom, prudence, and magnanimity as distinct entities, without intercommunication. If we could but see things as they are without the tyranny of *definition*!

Wordsworth has a singular power of expressing articulately that which would be mere mist without him, but is of vital importance.

GODWIN AND WORDSWORTH

(Reprinted from *The Pilot*, 20th April 1901. With added postscript.)

DR. ÉMILE LEGOUIS, in his singularly interesting book, *La Jeunesse de William Wordsworth*, well translated into English by Mr. T. W. Matthews (Dent and Co., 1897), calls attention to the influence on Wordsworth in his early years of Godwin's *Political Justice*. On reading *Political Justice* now, it is difficult to understand why Wordsworth should have been so much affected by it. Its philosophy, if philosophy it can be called, is simply the denial of any rule of conduct or of any belief which the understanding cannot prove, and the inclusion of man in the necessity which controls inanimate nature. 'All vice is nothing more than error and mistake' (i. 31).[1] 'We differ from the inferior animals in the greater facility with which we arrange our sensa-

[1] The references are to the first edition, that of 1793.

tions, and compare, prefer, and judge' (i. 57). 'Justice . . . is coincident with utility' (i. 121). 'If my mother were in a house on fire, and I had a ladder outside with which I could save her, she would not, because she was my mother, have any greater claim than the other inmates on my exertions' (i. 83). 'But,' says an objector, 'your mother nourished you in the helplessness of infancy.' 'When she first subjected herself,' replies Godwin, 'to the necessity of these cares, she was probably influenced by no particular motives of benevolence to her future offspring. . . . It is the disposition of the mind . . . that entitles to respect,' and consequently justice demands that I should rescue the most meritorious person first. 'All moral science may be reduced to this one head, calculation of the future' (ii. 468), and consequently a promise is not an obligation. The statement that it is essential that we should be able to depend on engagements 'would be somewhat more accurate if we said "that it was essential to various circumstances of human intercourse, that we should be known to bestow a steady attention upon the quantities of convenience or inconvenience, of good or evil, that might arise to others from our

conduct"' (i. 156). The understanding is supreme in us, and 'depravity would have gained little ground in the world, if every man had been in the exercise of his independent judgment' (i. 174). Reason (the Godwinian Reason) is sufficient to control or even extinguish the strongest of all passions. Marriage having been denounced as 'the most odious of all monopolies' (ii. 850), Godwin is reminded that half a dozen men perhaps might feel for a woman 'the same preference that I do.' 'This,' says he, 'will create no difficulty. We may all enjoy her conversation; and we shall be wise enough to consider the sensual intercourse as a very trivial object.' It was impossible not to acknowledge that the understanding often finds the problem rather abstruse of deciding whether an action will or will not secure ultimately the largest balance of happiness. Calvin was no fool, and yet he deliberately came to the conclusion that in burning Servetus he was promoting the welfare of mankind; but 'Calvin was unacquainted with the principles of justice, and therefore could not practise them. The duty of no man can exceed his capacity' (i. 102). As to Godwin's necessarianism, it is perhaps hardly worth while

to cite passages in order to explain it. It is of the usual type, incontrovertible if the question is to be settled by common logic. 'Volition is that state of an intellectual being in which, the mind being affected in a certain manner by the apprehension of an end to be accomplished, a certain motion of the organs and members of the animal frame is found to be produced' (i. 297). 'A knife has a capacity of cutting. In the same manner a human being has a capacity of walking, though it may be no more true of him than of the inanimate substance, that he has the power of exercising or not exercising that capacity' (i. 308). 'A knife is as capable as a man of being employed in the purposes of virtue, and the one is no more free than the other as to its employment. The mode in which a knife is made subservient to these purposes is by material impulse. The mode in which a man is made subservient is by inducement and persuasion. But both are equally the affair of necessity. The man differs from the knife, just as the iron candlestick differs from the brass one; he has one more way of being acted upon. This additional way in man is motive, in the candlestick is magnetism' (i. 309).

At first sight it is, as I have said, a wonder that Wordsworth should have been much impressed by such doctrines as these, but the evidence is strong that for a time they lay upon him like a nightmare. I will not quote the *Borderers* for a reason which will be seen presently, but the testimony of Hazlitt, Coleridge, the *Prelude*, and the *Excursion* is decisive. '"Throw aside your books of chemistry," said Wordsworth to a young man, a student in the Temple, "and read *Godwin on Necessity*"' (Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age*, p. 49, 3rd edition). Now it is a question, important historically, but more important to ourselves privately, whether Wordsworth's temporary subjugation by *Political Justice* was due to pure intellectual conviction. I think not. Coleridge noticed that Wordsworth suffered much from hypochondria. He complains that during the Scotch tour in 1803 'Wordsworth's hypochondriacal feelings keep him silent and self-centred.' He again says to Richard Sharp, in 1804, that Wordsworth has 'occasional fits of hypochondriacal uncomfortableness, from which, more or less, and at longer or shorter intervals, he has never been wholly free from his very childhood,' and that he has a 'hypochondriacal graft in

his nature.' Wordsworth himself speaks of times when—

> '. . . fears and fancies thick upon me came;
> Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not nor could name.'

He is haunted with

> '. . . the fear that kills,'

and he thinks of Chatterton and his end.

During 1793, 1794, and part of 1795, this tendency to hypochondria must have been greatly encouraged. His hopes in the Revolution had begun to fail, but the declaration of war against France made him wretched. He wandered about from place to place, unable to conjecture what his future would be. 'I have been doing nothing,' he tells Matthews, 'and still continue to do nothing. What is to become of me I know not.' He proposed to start a Republican magazine to be called the *Philanthropist*, and we find him inquiring whether he could get work on the London newspapers. Hypochondriacal misery is apt to take an intellectual shape. The most hopeless metaphysics or theology which we happen to encounter fastens on us, and we mistake for an unbiased conviction the form which the disease assumes. The *Political Justice*

found in Wordsworth the aptest soil for germination; it rooted and grew rapidly.

> 'So I fared,
> Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds
> Like culprits to the bar; calling the mind,
> Suspiciously, to establish in plain day
> Her titles and her honours; now believing,
> Now disbelieving; endlessly perplexed
> With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground
> Of obligation, what the rule and whence
> The sanction; till, demanding formal *proof*,
> And seeking it in everything, I lost
> All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
> Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
> Yielded up moral questions in despair.
> This was the crisis of that strong disease,
> This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I drooped,
> Deeming our blessed reason of least use
> Where wanted most: "The lordly attributes
> Of will and choice," I bitterly exclaimed,
> "What are they but a mockery of a Being
> Who hath in no concerns of his a test
> Of good and evil; knows not what to fear
> Or hope for, what to covet or to shun:
> And who, if those could be discerned, would yet
> Be little profited, would see, and ask,
> Where is the obligation to enforce?"'

In the autumn of 1795, Wordsworth, helped by the modest legacy of Raisley Calvert, was able to move with Dorothy to Racedown, and he immediately set to work on the *Borderers*, which I take to be the

beginning of recovery. It was obviously written to exhibit the character of Oswald, the villain. He is one of a band of outlaws, and is jealous of the appointment of Marmaduke as chief. His revenge is a determination to make Marmaduke as guilty as himself. Marmaduke is in love with Idonea, and Oswald, partly by inventing lies about her blind father, Herbert, and partly by dexterous sophistry derived from *Political Justice*, endeavours to persuade Marmaduke to kill him. Marmaduke hesitates, but is finally overpowered. Although he cannot himself murder Herbert, he draws him to a desolate moor and leaves him to perish. Oswald then recounts his own story. When he was on a voyage to Syria he had believed on false evidence, that some wrong had been done to him by his captain, and accordingly contrived that he should be left to die in agony on a barren island. Oswald discovered that he had been deceived, but he declares exultantly to Marmaduke that, after being somewhat stunned, he found himself emancipated :—

'Life stretched before me smooth as some broad way
Cleared for a monarch's progress. Priests might spin
Their veil, but not for me—'twas in fit place
Among its kindred cobwebs.'

He concludes by avowing impudently that Herbert is innocent and that the impulse which prompted the monstrous perfidy of procuring his death was—

'I would have made us equal once again.'

This is the commentary by Wordsworth on Godwin's parable by which he illustrates the simplicity of action in what we call the soul. 'When a ball upon a billiard-board is struck,' etc. etc. 'Exactly similar to this . . . are the actions of the human mind' (i. 306-7). Lacy, one of the freebooters, asks Wallace:—

'But for the motive?'

and Wallace replies:—

'Natures such as his
Spin motives out of their own bowels, Lacy!'

The *Borderers* is stuffed full with Godwinism. 'Remorse,' exclaims Oswald,

'It cannot live with thought; think on, think on,
And it will die. What! In this universe,
Where the least things control the greatest, where
The faintest breath that breathes can move a world;
What! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed,
A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.'

So Godwin: 'We shall, therefore, no more be disposed to repent of our own faults than of the faults of others' (i. 315). The noxious thing is now, however, with Wordsworth no longer subject but object, and when a man can cast loose the enemy and survey him, victory is three parts achieved.

There is no evidence that Wordsworth attempted any reasoned confutation of *Political Justice*. It was falsified in him by Racedown, by better health, by the society of his beloved sister, and finally by the friendship with Coleridge, although there was but little intimacy with him till the summer of 1797, and the *Borderers* was finished in 1796. This, then, is the moral—to repeat what has been said before—that certain beliefs, at any rate with men of Wordsworth's stamp, are sickness, and that with the restoration of vitality and the influx of joy they disappear.

One other observation. Wordsworth never afterwards vexed himself with free will, necessity, and the like. He knew such matters were not for him. Many problems may appear to be of great consequence, but it is our duty to avoid them if our protecting genius warns us away.

POSTSCRIPT

THE most singular portion of *Political Justice* is that which deals with Population, and some notice of it, by way of postscript, may be pardoned, for it cannot be neglected in our estimate of Godwin, and it is a curious instance of the futility of attempting to comprehend character without searching into corners and examination of facts which, judged by external bulk, are small. These small facts may contain principles which are constituent of the man. The chapter on Population occupies a few pages at the end of the second volume of the *Political Justice.*

Godwin would like to see property equalised, or common, and he tries to answer the argument that excessive population would ensue. He quotes (ii. 862) a reported conjecture of Franklin's that 'mind will one day become omnipotent over matter.' If over matter, which is outside us, thinks Godwin, why not over our own bodies, 'in a word, why may not man be

one day immortal' (ii. 862). He points out that the mind already has great power over the body, that it can conquer pain, assist in the cure of disease, and successfully resist old age.

'Why is it that a mature man soon loses that elasticity of limb which characterises the heedless gaiety of youth? Because he desists from youthful habits. He assumes an air of dignity incompatible with the lightness of childish sallies. He is visited and vexed with all the cares that rise out of our mistaken institutions, and his heart is no longer satisfied and gay. Hence his limbs become stiff and unwieldy. This is the forerunner of old age and death' (ii. 863-64). 'Medicine may reasonably be stated to consist of two branches, the animal and intellectual. The latter of these has been infinitely too much neglected' (ii. 869). We may look forward to a time when we shall be 'indifferent to the gratifications of sense. They please at present by their novelty, that is because we know not how to estimate them. They decay in the decline of life indirectly because the system refuses them, but directly and principally because they no longer excite the ardour and passion of mind. . . . The gratifications of sense

please at present by their imposture. We soon learn to despise the mere animal function, which, apart from the delusions of intellect, would be nearly the same in all cases; and to value it, only as it happens to be relieved by personal charms or mental excellence. We absurdly imagine that no better road can be found to the sympathy and intercourse of minds. But a very slight degree of attention might convince us that this is a false road, full of danger and deception. Why should I esteem another, or by another be esteemed? For this reason only, because esteem is due, and only so far as it is due.

'The men therefore who exist when the earth shall refuse itself to a more extended population will cease to propagate, for they will no longer have any motive, either of error or duty, to induce them. In addition to this they will perhaps be immortal. The whole will be a people of men, and not of children. Generation will not succeed generation, nor truth have in a certain degree to recommence her career at the end of every thirty years. There will be no war, no crimes, no administration of justice as it is called, and no government. These latter articles are at no great distance; and it is

not impossible that some of the present race of men may live to see them in part accomplished. But, besides this, there will be no disease, no anguish, no melancholy, and no resentment. Every man will seek with ineffable ardour the good of all' (ii. 870-72).

A very curious vein, not golden indeed but copper, let us say, is hidden away in the earthy mass of Godwin. The dull, heavy-featured creature sees an apocalyptic vision and becomes poetical. It is partly absurd, but not because it is ideal, and there are lineaments in it of the true Utopia. Godwin probably would have denounced the Revelation of St. John the Divine as superstitious nonsense, but he saw before him a kind of misty, distorted reflection of the New Jerusalem, in which there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, where there shall be no more curse, no night, no candle, no light of the sun. It might have been thought that it was impossible to establish a connection between Patmos and Skinner Street, but the first postulate of Euclid's elements holds good universally, 'that a straight line may be drawn from any one point to any other point.'

NOTES

Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
Credebat libris.—HOR. Sat., II. i. 30.

NOTHING is more dangerous than a mass of discontent which does not know what remedy is to be sought. All sorts of cures will be tried, many of them mere quackery, and their failure will make matters worse.

Whatever may be the meaning of the process of the world, however disheartening some steps in its evolution may be, they are necessary, and without them, perhaps, some evil could not thoroughly have been worked out.

People often manifest a diseased desire to express their will. A theory is adopted, not because the facts force it upon them, but because its adoption shows their power. The larger, the freer the nature, the less there is of this action of the will, the more the mind is led.

A mere dream, a vague hope may be more potent than certainty in a lesser matter. The faintest vision of God is more determinative of life than a gross earthly certainty.

The more nearly the performer on a musical instrument approaches perfection, the larger is that part of his execution which is unconscious. Consciousness arises with defect, or sense of something to be overcome. How conscious we are when striving to think and work in ill-health!

The highest education is that which teaches us to guide ourselves by motives which are intangible, remote, incapable of direct and material appreciation.

Weak minds find confirmation of their beliefs in the discovery of the same beliefs in other people. They do not take the trouble to find out how their neighbours obtained these beliefs. If they are current at the time, the probability is that the coincidence is worthless as any evidence of validity.

The certainty which comes of intelligent conviction is a tempered certainty. Its possessor knows the difficulty of the path

by which he has reached it, and the reasons which on his way have appeared so potent against it. Fanaticism is the accompaniment of conclusions which are not the result of reason.

To understand a thing is to understand all its laws. The thing is then nothing but law, and mere matter seems to disappear.

What is it which governs the selection of truths which make up religions? Why are this and that chosen? Has not the selection a damaging effect upon the great body of truth?

Every action should be an end in itself as well as a means. The end of getting up in the morning, as Goethe says, is getting up.

We are always searching for something extraordinary which shall give life its pleasure and value. The extraordinary must be contributed by our own minds and feelings.

The real object in any human being of my love and worship is that which is not

in any table of virtues, nor can I in any way describe it: it is something which perpetually escapes, which is not to be found in anything said or done.

It is a common mistake to demand a definition of that which can have none. We loosely cover a mass of phenomena which are diverse with a single word. For example, we puzzle over a definition of life, but there is no such thing as life in the sense of a single, distinct entity.

Religion has done harm by assigning an artificial urgency to insoluble problems. We are all told that we must be certain on matters concerning which the wisest man is ignorant. When we begin to reflect and to doubt, the urgency unhappily remains and we are distressed.

I know a man who had to encounter three successive trials of all the courage and inventive faculty in him. If he had failed in one he would have been ruined. The odds were desperate against him in each, and against ultimate victory were overwhelming. Nevertheless he made the attempt

and was triumphant almost by a miracle in each struggle. How often calculation is folly and cowardice!

Before we can hear the Divine Voice we must shut out all other voices, so that we may be able to listen, to discern its faintest whisper. The most precious messages are those which are whispered.

A negative may be really positive. It depends on the extent of that which the negative excludes. If I say of hydrogen that it is not oxygen, nothing is gained. If I say it is not a fluid nor a solid, more is gained. So in the determinations of Spirit, God, etc., although we use negatives, the results may be of value.

True mental training is a discipline compelling us to *dwell* on that which is presented to us, to discover what unites it to other objects and what differentiates it from them. To the untrained mind creation is a blur. The moral effect on a child of teaching it to express distinction by significant words is great.

'Ought' is a singular instance of the con-

fusion wrought by words and of their inefficiency. There is no single 'ought' and therefore no science of the obligation it implies. 'Ought' in the phrase 'you ought to speak the truth' refers to an instinct in us to report veraciously what we see. 'Ought' of self-sacrifice refers to love, and 'ought' of sobriety to the subordination of desires, to a difference in their authority of which we can give no account, excepting that we are creatures fashioned in a certain way.

In the presence of some people we inevitably depart from ourselves: we are inaccurate, say things we do not feel, and talk nonsense. When we get home we are conscious that we have made fools of ourselves. Never go near these people.

What cardboard puppets are the creations of fiction compared with a common man or woman intimately known!

How much of what I say is an echo; how little is myself! Sometimes it seems as if my real self were nothing and that what stands for it were a mere miscellany of odds and ends picked up here and there. What a Self is the Jesus of the Gospels!

A cousin of mine had an evening class of poor girls. She was trying to explain to them the words 'liquid' and 'solid.'

'You walked over the bridge; it was a hard road.'

'Yes, teacher.'

'If you had gone down by the side of the bridge you could not have walked across there?'

'No, teacher.'

'If you were to try and were to put your feet on the water, where would you go?'

'To hell, teacher.'

The association of the question, 'Where would you go?' was too strong.

This sunset, which is common to the whole county, is more to me than anything exclusively mine.

If emotion be profound, symbolism, as a means of expression, is indispensable.

There would be no objection to 'telling the truth' about Burns, Byron, and Shelley if it could be told. But it cannot be told. We are informed that they did this or that, and the thing they did is to us what it would be if done by ourselves.

We are most vain of that which is least ourselves, of that which is acquired, put on, stuck in. It is not correct to say that a woman is vain of her beauty.

Controversy is demoralising. Never suffer yourself to become an advocate. Never rely on controversy to convince. Say what you have to say and leave it. *Do* it if you wish to persuade.

People are often unkind, not from malignity, but from ineptitude.

It is of the greatest importance continually to bear in mind that the violation of a law personal to myself is as immoral as the violation of a general law, and may be more mischievous.

To die is easy when we are in perfect health. On a fine spring morning, out of doors, on the downs, mind and body sound and exhilarated, it would be nothing to lie down on the turf and pass away.

What we want is wise counsel on particular occasions. Principles we can get by the bushel anywhere. The reason why our

friends are so useless is that they will not take trouble. The selection and the application of the principle are difficult.

It is terrible to live with a person who has a strong, narrow sense of duty without further-reaching thought or love by which the rigidity of duty may be softened.

By the third, which is neither ourselves nor the object, do we recognise it. The third is the celestial light.

It is appalling to reflect that there are enormous masses of human energy which can find no proper outlet. The consequence is mischief either through expression in any direction and at any cost, or through suppression. We want an organisation of energy, one of the noblest offices of a true church.

The tyranny of the imagination is perhaps that which is most to be dreaded. By strength of will we can prevent an act, but no strength of will is able to prevent the invasion of self-created pictures. The only remedies are health and indifference to them when they present themselves. If we worry

ourselves about them they become worse. If we let them alone they fade and we forget them.

Thinking much upon insoluble problems is apt to breed superstition even in the strongest minds. The failure of the reason weakens our reliance on it, and the difference between the incomprehensible and the absurd is very fine.

In this howling Bedlam of voices, it is of no use to talk or write—no man, if he has anything to say, can be heard. He is reviewed to-day and forgotten to-morrow. To soothe the pangs of a single sufferer, to drain a poor man's cottage and give him wholesome drinking water, are good things done of which we can be sure.

Life is a matter of small virtues, but we have to bring them to perfection. This may be done by great principles. The humblest act may proceed from that which is beyond the stars.

What a vile antithesis is that between a man and his faults! If I love a man, I do

not love his faults, for they are abstractions, but I love the man *in* his faults. Are they not truly himself? He is often more himself in his faults than in his virtues.

We should not talk as if we were responsible for the effect of what we say. We are responsible for saying it, and for nothing more. A higher power is responsible for the effect which is to follow from each cause.

Wisdom for old age.—Check the propensity to dwell on what you have thought before. Try to get new ideas into your head. Beware of giving trouble or asking for sympathy. Do everything yourself, which you have been in the habit of doing, so long as you can move a muscle, and when you cannot, secure, if possible, paid help: watch what the most devoted of friends or relatives say of continued attendance on the sick: note the relief when the sick man dies. Let not the thought sadden you that six weeks after you are in your grave those to whom you are now dear will be laughing and living just as if you had never existed. Why should they not? Are you of such consequence that they should for ever wear

mourning for you? A slow march as you are carried to the churchyard, but when a handful of earth has been thrown on your coffin, let everybody go home to draw up the blinds and open the windows. So much dead already, all passion, so many capacities for enjoyment, why care for this miserable residuum, this poor empty *I*?

Clear vision is not often the cause of distress. It is rather the cloud of imagination distorting what is before us and preventing distinct view. Science, removing the heavens to an infinite distance, destroying traditions, abolishing our little theologies, does not disturb our peace so seriously as that vague dreaming in which there is no thinking.

Ah, it is not a quarrel which is so deadly! It is the strange transformation of what were once thought to be charms and virtues. The soft blue eyes are now simply silly; innocence is stupidity; docility is incapacity of resolution; the sweet, even temper is absence of passion.

Is it true that less evidence is necessary

to prove an event which is probable than one that is improbable? The probability of an event is no evidence that it actually happened. Its probability may be the reason why we should examine the evidence more closely, because witnesses are more likely, in the case of a probable event, to refrain from scrutiny than in the case of one not probable. I sit at my window and see a whitish object with four legs in a field. I am short-sighted, but I at once say 'a cow,' and take no pains to ascertain whether it is a cow or not. If I had seen a white object apparently with three legs only, I should have gone out, inspected it closely, and should have called other people to look at it.

I pray for a gift which perhaps would be miraculous: simply to be able to see that field of waving grass as I should see it if association and the 'film of custom' did not obscure it.

Why do we admire intellect when it is united with even diabolic disregard of moral laws? Partly because it stands out more prominently; partly because it triumphs over obstacles; but mainly because we are

all more or less in sympathy with insurrection and the assertion of individuality.

As we move higher, personality becomes of less consequence. We do not live in the 'I,' but in truths. Something of a metaphysical hint here.

Principles are dangerous tools for a fool. What awful mischief they have done!

Never was there a time in which men were less governed by ideas. The Church and the sects are neither Calvinist nor Arminian, orthodox nor rational, and in politics an idea damns a measure at once.

We have no capitalised happiness, nothing on which to draw when temporary sources fail.

A decided bent or twist, is not unsuitable in a man, but I do not care for it in a woman. I love that equipoise in the faces of the Greek women in the old statues and sculptures. It appears also in some pictures of the Virgin.

The duty of the State as to toleration cannot be decided by an appeal to rights.

Everybody admits that government is sometimes justified in suppressing what is honestly believed. But if government had not been resisted we should have had no Christianity. The vindication of the authority of the State is a vindication of persecution, and if we dispute this authority we cannot logically disallow dangerous licence. There is no way out of the difficulty so long as we generalise. Toleration is an abstraction, nothing but a word. What we have to decide is, whether it is wise or unwise to send to prison the people now before us who preach bigamy, assassination of kings, or theological heresy.

When we struggle to see more than we possibly can see we undervalue what we indubitably see.

There is but little thinking, or perhaps it is more correct to say but little reflection, in the Bible. There is profound sympathy with a few truths, but ideas are not sought for their own sake. Carlyle is Biblical. It has been said scoffingly that he is no thinker. It is his glory that he is not.

What we have toiled after painfully often lies unused. No opportunity occurs for

saying or doing a tithe of it. The hour demands its own special wisdom.

When we really love we cannot believe that our love is mortal. We feel, not only that it is immortal, but that it is eternal, in the sense in which Spinoza uses the word. It is not the attraction of something entirely limited and personal to that which is also limited and personal.

We think of rest as natural to bodies, and motion as something added. But the new doctrine is that motion is primary. Nothing is at rest, and, so far as we know, rest has never been. It is an astounding conception.

There is a certain distance at which each person whom we know is naturally placed from us. It varies with each, and we must not attempt to alter it. We may clasp him who is close, and we are not to pull closer him who is more remote.

Many people would be much better if they would let themselves be as good as

they really are. They seem to take delight in making themselves less.

We are much misled by characters in fiction or on the stage, for they are always more consistent than men and women in real life. Real men and women are seldom controlled for twenty-four hours by the same motives or principles. If my friend is mean to-day, let me not doubt his generosity to-morrow. Let me joyously believe in it when the morrow comes.

What a pest is the re-appearance in us of discarded conclusions! It would be of service if we could keep a register of those things which, after careful examination, we have determined to be false.

Acting from the strongest motives, even if they are bad, is perhaps not so dangerous as acting from none. The evils which arise through deeds done from conspicuous motives attract attention, but the vast sum of misery caused by mere idle, irresolute swaying hither and thither passes unnoticed.

Pig-headedness is often a sign of weakness of will. The pig-headed person knows he is weak, and to convince himself and others of

his resolution holds to any chance purpose with tenacity. The less reasonable the purpose is, the more obstinately he clings to it, because, by so doing, he shows as he thinks his strength of volition.

If we desire peace we must get beyond the notion of personality. Nothing of any value is bound up with it: it is an illusion.

Intense feeling gives intellectual precision. The man who feels profoundly the beauty of a cloud is the man who can describe it. But the first effect of intense feeling is often to break up false precision. The ideas of God, life, personality, right and wrong, are examples.

The blue sky is more beautiful because we know it is not painted opacity, but transparent.

The slowness of the change in the sky is exquisite, the dying out of the light in the clouds after sunset. The quiet abiding of the grey cloud as darkness thickens is wonderful.

June.—Sky and sea pure blue. The blue tint suffuses the distant vessels. One large

sailing ship with sails all set is so blue that it differs only by a shade from sky and sea.

It is not true that guileless people are the most easily deceived. S. G. is not sharp-witted, but she is transparent as a pool of rain on meadow grass, and consequently it is impossible to deceive her, and ridiculous to attempt it: her eyes forbid it. She does not infer insincerity: it is automatically rejected.

July.—North-easterly wind, strong: hateful in the streets and even in the house: dust everywhere. Inclined to shut the windows and stay indoors, but went out for a long walk up to the flag-staff. A perfect day for that view. The bay all shades of blue; here and there deep, and, inshore, the blue is broken with pure white from the tops of the waves: the yellow beach to the farthest point clasping the sea like an arm. So beautiful that it gives pain: it is not possible to extend oneself to it.

Whether truth does or does not lie in the mean depends on the selection of the extremes. A mechanical choice of the mean is stupidity.

The Athanasian Creed is not objectionable because of its damnatory clauses. Neglect to observe the finest distinctions continually involves damnation. The difference between a vice and a virtue may be a hair-line. The true reason for rejecting the Creed is that it is manufactured, that it is not a statement of what is seen and felt to be true. There is nevertheless a certain dogmatic pride in it, a desire to affirm as offensively as possible.

The peace which orthodox religion is said to bring is obtained by clipping the Infinite and reducing it to a finite. The joy of *inclusion* is great but false.

'And thy fats shall overflow with new wine'—Proverbs iii. 10, Revised Version. Called on A. in London. I forget how it came about, but in course of conversation he asked me if 'fats' were not a mistake for 'vats.' I told him it was not, turning up the word in the dictionary as an equivalent to 'vats.' Called on his sister, who was staying three or four miles away and had come up to town that afternoon from the country where she lived. That very evening she asked me the same question her

brother had asked. She had not seen him, nor held any communication with him on the subject, nor had it been suggested to them by any person or book. Moreover, neither of them is a frequent reader of the Bible. Yesterday I told the story to A. in his sister's presence. She confirmed it, and A., who is accustomed to scientific investigation, was quite unable to account for it. If a jury were trying a prisoner charged with murder, and an equally singular concurrence of circumstances were in evidence against him, they would not hesitate to hang him.

If you are very short-sighted or half blind, it is safer in the twilight to shut the eyes and depend entirely on the touch in moving about.

The books on the adjustment of astronomical instruments say that if there is a slight error, it is better always to make allowance for it than to attempt to correct it.

The sun, we say, is the cause of heat, but the heat *is* the sun, here on this window-ledge.

The contact of a *system* of philosophy or religion with reality is that of a tangent with a circle. It touches the circle at one point, but instantly the circle edges away.

In every man there is something of the Universal Spirit, strangely limited by that which is finite and personal, but still there. Occasionally it makes itself known in a word, look, or gesture, and then he becomes one with the stars and sea.

We cannot really understand a religion unless we have believed it.

We ought to cultivate strength of will by doing what we have once decided to do. Subsequent reasons for not doing it may appear plausible, but it will generally be better to adhere to our first resolution. The advantage gained by change will not be equal to that derived from persistence.

Never be afraid of being commonplace. Never turn aside from the truth because it is commonplace.

A nightmare is not scattered while we are asleep. It disappears simply by—*waking*.

Cursed temperament.—A long drought broke up. The grass had been burnt, and the cattle were dying for want of water. In one week two inches of rain fell.

A. 'What a blessing this rain is!'

B. 'Yes, but a reaction is sure to follow. I've noticed that after weather like this we always have a spell of dry, northerly winds.'

The prompter which urges us on from one point to another, never discouraged by failure to see in the present moment what it seemed to possess when we pursued it, or rather, not permitting us to stop to find out if there be any failure—this it is by which we live. When it departs it is time to die.

January.—The wind is north-west after yesterday's fog and rain from the south. Suddenly and silently, just after sunset, the whole south-western sky has blazed up, passing from glowing flame-colour on the horizon to carmine on the zenith. Between the promontories of cloud are lakes and gulfs of the tenderest green and blue. What magnificent pomp, fit to celebrate the death of a god for the world's salvation! But there is nothing below to explain it. It

must be a spectacle displayed for celestial reasons altogether hidden.

Much misunderstanding would be prevented if we were to say exactly what we believe and not modify it to suit, as we suppose, the person to whom we speak.

Humour people sometimes in what you do, but not in the expression of your convictions. Go a mile out of your way to please an obstinate friend, but utter with precision what you believe. It is in the sharpness and finish that its value lies.

Everybody in these civilised, intercommunicative days seems arrested: everybody is a compromise. It is rare that we meet with a person who has been let alone, whose own particular self has been developed free from intrusion.

People believe the truth more readily if something difficult of belief or incredible is mixed with it.

I want no more beliefs. What I want is active strength in those I have. I know there is no ghost round the corner, but I dare not go.

There is always a point in our insistence or persuasion when it is most effective, and generally it is much lower than we suppose. One degree above it is waste and impediment.

Keep a watch upon your tongue when you are in particularly good health.

Early morning before sunrise: the valley was filled with mist; red clouds in the sky. For a minute or two the mist took the colour, but fainter, of the clouds. What patience is required in order to see! The sun had not risen, the grass in the field was obviously green, but not without intent fixture of the eyes upon it was the dark, twilight shade of green recognised which was its peculiar meaning and beauty. To most of us, perhaps not to artists, it is more difficult to look than to think.

The just judgment is not that of the judge who has no interest in it. The most unjust judgments are due to indifference.

The sun is setting in crimson, delicate blue and green. I think of the earth as a revolving ball. This was the Creator's design, or, if we prefer so to speak, this

was the law, that there should be a ball and that it should turn on its axis. But just as surely was it the design or law that there should be these colours, crimson, blue, and green, and that I should be affected by them. This affection was rolled up in the primal impulse which started the planet and is as necessary as its revolution.

Zeal in proselytising is often due to an uneasy suspicion that we only half-believe.

We should take pains to be polite to those whom we love. Politeness preserves love, is a kind of sheath to it.

The hornbeam hedge is coming into leaf in patches although all parts of each side face the same point of the compass. The leaves of some patches are fully expanded, while in others they are only in bud. The dry, brown, dead leaves of last year have remained through the winter and early spring, but they are dropping off now that the new leaves begin to shoot.

We ought not to expect every child to be religious. The religious temper is an endowment like that for painting or poetry.

A. and B. meet on the road. B. is a retired official and has nothing to do.

B. 'Meant to have come to see you several times' (has not called for nine months), 'but I have so many engagements.' (Shows a basket.) 'Look here, just had to take some eggs to C. for my wife.'

'If a man turns to Christ, nothing in him is to be left behind. Every passion must be brought to Him to be transformed by Him. Otherwise the man does not come, but only a part of him.' [Said to me years ago by a pious friend now dead.]

The real proportion between vice and virtue in a man is often misjudged because the vice is before us continually, while the virtue does not obtrude.

If you are to live in happiness and peace with the woman you love, you must not permit the daily course of life to have its way unchecked. There must be hours of removal to a distance when in silence you create anew her ideal and proper form, when you think of her as sculptured in white marble.

Blacksmiths forging; one on this side of the anvil and the other on the opposite side. Each keeps his own time, not regulating his stroke by watching his mate.

There is in man an upwelling spring of life, energy, love, whatever you like to call it. If a course is not cut for it, it turns the ground round it into a swamp.

Went into the cathedral and heard morning service. Miracle of miracles! Into the soul of a carpenter's son more than eighteen centuries ago came a thought, and it is returned to us to-day in majestic architecture, music of voice and organ.

Disbelief in Christianity is not so much to be dreaded as its acceptance with a complete denial of it in society and politics.

The love that has lasted for years; which has resisted all weakness and defect; has been constant in all moods and circumstances better and worse; has exacted nothing; has been content with silence; always soft and easy as the circumambient air, a love with no reserve; what is there in any relationship to person or thing worth a straw compared with it!

We ought to endeavour to give our dreams reality, but in Reality we should preserve the dream.

If her unhappiness does not destroy my happiness, and if her happiness does not make me happy, I do not love her.

There are problems which cannot be solved, for directly we have stated them, as we suppose, they elude the statement and are outside. Who can say what is the meaning of the question, 'Does God exist?'

There is always a multitude of reasons both in favour of doing a thing and against doing it. The art of debate lies in presenting them; the art of life in neglecting ninety-nine hundredths of them.

How beautiful is a rapid rivulet trying to clear itself from stirred-up mud.

The most foolish things we say are said from another person's point of view and not from our own.

On a siding at one of the stations on the Great Western Railway were a number of old engines waiting to be broken up. There

they stood, uncleaned, their bright parts rusted and indistinguishable from the others. Some were back to back and some front to front. There they stood and saw the expresses rush past them with their new engines.

Went out this afternoon to call on C. and his wife. They are certainly the most cultivated people I know. They travel a good deal, and each of them can speak two or three languages besides English. They read the best books, and do not read those which are bad. Some friends were there, and I was entertained with intelligent criticism of literature, music, and pictures, and learned much that was worth knowing. But I came away unsatisfied, and rather dazed. On my way back—it was a singularly warm, clear evening in February—I turned in to see an old lady who lives near me. She was sitting wrapped up at her wide-open window, looking at the light that was still left in the south-west. I said, of course, that I hoped she would not take cold. 'Oh no,' she replied, 'I often sit here, and so long as I keep myself warm I come to no harm. I cannot read by candlelight, and I am thankful that this room faces the

south. I know the stars much better than when I was young.' I took the chair beside her, and for ten minutes neither of us spoke, but I was not conscious for an instant of the disagreeable feeling that silence must be broken, and search be made for something with which to break it. If two persons are friends in the best sense of the word, they are not uncomfortable if they do not talk when they are together. Presently she told me that she had received news that morning of the birth of a granddaughter. She was much pleased. The mother already had two sons and desired a girl. I stayed for about half an hour, and went home in debt to her for peace.

Bacon observes that whatever the mind seizes and dwells upon with peculiar satisfaction is to be held in suspicion. Naturally so, because it is nearly certain to be something merely personal to ourselves.

Excepting in one word, the betrayal of Jesus, the defection of Peter, the examination before Pilate and Herod, and the crucifixion, are recorded, as Spedding notices, without any vituperation. The excepted

word, not named by Spedding, is 'blasphemously' (Luke xxii. 65).[1]

Coleridge says that great minds are never wrong but in consequence of being right, which is perfectly true; but it may be added that they are also right through being wrong.

'When he is moderate and regular in any of these things, out of a sense of Christian sobriety and self-denial, that he may offer unto God a more reasonable and holy life, then it is, that the smallest rule of this kind is naturally the beginning of great piety. For the smallest rule in these matters is of great benefit, as it teaches us some part of the government of ourselves, as it keeps up a tenderness of mind, as it presents God often to our thoughts, and brings a sense of religion into the ordinary actions of our common life.'—(Law's *Serious Call.*) Men are restrained by fear of consequences, but it is Law's rule which gives strength and dignity. Living in a certain way because Perfection demands it produces a

[1] Even this word disappears in the Revised Version, where the Greek is translated 'reviling Him.'

result different from that obtained by living in the same way through fear of injury to health.

Man is the revelation of the Infinite, and it does not become finite in him. It remains the Infinite.

Luther says somewhere, 'Do not anxiously search for the pillars which are to keep the sky from falling.' Many of us have been afraid all our lives that the sky would fall, and have anxiously searched for the pillars. There are none, and yet the sky will not fall.

Idolatry is the worship of that which is non-significant. The worship of one God, as Coleridge says, may be idolatry.

What a man is conscious of, is not himself, but that which is not himself. Without a belief in the existence of an external world, I could not believe in my own existence.

The dialectic of Socrates is positive in so far as it shows the futility of reasoning as

a means of reaching the truth. If we wish to know whether courage is knowledge, we must face imminent danger.

The omnipotence of God—that is to say, absolute omnipotence, a power which knows no resistance—is an utterly inconceivable abstraction. Yet much speculation is based on it.

There is a great reserve of incomprehensibility in all the few friends for whom I really care. It is better that it should be so. What would a comprehensible friend be worth? The impenetrable background gives the beauty to that which is in front of it. The most unfathomable also of my friends are those who are most sincere and luminous.

Note on a picture.—The sea-shore; low cliffs topped with grass; a small cove; the open sea, calm, intensely blue; sky also deep blue, but towards the horizon there are soft, white clouds. On a little sandy ridge sit a brown fisher-boy and fisher-

girl, immortal as the sea, cliffs, and clouds which are a setting or frame for them.

The strength of the argument in favour of a philosophy or religion is proportionate to the applicability of the philosophy or religion to life. If in all situations we find it ready, it is true.

Bacon observes that 'interpretations' of Nature, that is to say real generalisations, elicited from facts by a just and methodical process, 'cannot suddenly strike the understanding' like 'anticipations' collected from a few instances. I have often noticed that 'striking' is seldom a sign of truth, and that those things which are most true, the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables, for example, do not 'strike.'

We foolishly exaggerate ingratitude to us. Ought we to require of those whom we have served, that they should be always confessing their obligations to us? Why should we care about neglect? 'Seek Him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that

calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is His name.'

The worship of the idol is often more passionate than that of God. People prostrate themselves in ecstasy before the idol, and remain unmoved in the presence of a starry night. A starry night does not provoke hysterics. The adoration of the veritably divine is calm.

'It is a sad thing,' said she, 'that so kind and good a man should be an infidel.' 'It is a sad thing to me,' said her terrible sister, 'that an infidel should be what you call kind and good.'

Plus sapit vulgus, quia tantum, quantum opus est, sapit.[1] Quoted by Montaigne (*Of Presumption*) from Lactantius. Characteristic of Montaigne and true, so far that a man can know nothing thoroughly unless the knowledge be a necessity.

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[1] The vulgar is the wiser, because it is but as wise as it must needes.—(Florio's translation.)

'Certainty of knowledge,' says Dr. Johnson in the *Idler* (No. 84), 'not only excludes mistake, but fortifies veracity. . . . That which is fully known cannot be falsified but with reluctance of understanding, and alarm of conscience: of understanding, the lover of truth; of conscience, the sentinel of virtue.'

At the present day we are chiefly taken up with that which is beyond our grasp. Our literature is the newspapers, and nine-tenths of what we read in them morning and evening we do not understand. Everybody is expected to take sides in politics, but not one person in a thousand can give an intelligible account of political questions. The difficulty of so doing is much increased by the absence of systematic information. We get leading articles and columns of telegrams, but seldom concise exposition or carefully edited and connected history.

An object is of importance to us in inverse proportion to the square of the distance, but men worry themselves about the news from China and will not give five minutes' thought in a week to their own souls or to those of wife or child. It is pathetic to see how excited they become about

remote events which cannot affect their happiness one iota. Why should we not occupy ourselves with that which is definite when there is so much of it? Political problems confront us, but if they are too big for us, let us avoid them by every means in our power. If we are in doubt we ought not to vote. The question which we are incapable of settling will be settled better by Time than by the intermeddling of ignorance.

In religion, and science also, we dare not say *I do not know.* We must always be dabbling in matters on which we can come to no conclusion worth a rotten nut. We busy ourselves with essays on the dates and composition of the books of the Old Testament and cannot tell the story of Joshua or Saul; we listen to lectures on radium, or the probable exhaustion of the sun's energy, and have never learned the laws of motion. Few people estimate properly the evil of habitual intercourse with that which is vague and indeterminate. The issues before us not being clearly cut and comprehensible, the highest faculties of our minds are not exercised. We lazily wander over the surface without coming to a definite conclusion. Perhaps we pick up by chance some irra-

tional notion, which we defend with obstinacy, for we are more dogmatic concerning that which we cannot prove than we are concerning a truth which is incontrovertible. The former is our own personal property, the latter is common. One step further, and by constantly affirming and denying when we have no demonstration, lying becomes easy.

There is much which is called criticism that is poisonous, not because it is mistaken, but because it invites people to assert beyond their knowledge or capacity. A popular lecturer discusses the errors of Sir Walter Scott, Charlotte Brontë, or George Eliot before an audience but superficially acquainted with the works of these great authors and not qualified to pass judgment upon them. He is considered 'cheap' if he does not balance

> 'His wit all see-saw between that and this,
> Now high, now low, now master up, now miss.'

If we will be content with admiring, we are on much surer ground. It is by admiration and not by criticism that we live, and the main purpose of criticism should be to point out something to admire, which we should not have noticed. One great advan-

tage of studying Nature is that we are not tempted to criticise her. We go to the Academy, and for a whole morning contrast faults with merits. If the time so spent had been passed in the fields with the clouds we should have gone home less conceited.

It is an awful thought that behind human speech, incapable by its very nature of anything but approximate expression, and distorted by weakness and wilfulness, lies the TRUTH as it is, exact without qualification.

The long apprenticeship has ended in little or nothing. What I was fifty years ago I am now; certainly no better, with no greater self-control, with no greater magnanimity. How much I might have gained had I taken life as an art I cannot say.

I have been looking at a cabinet of flies. Hundreds of them, each different, were arranged in order and named. Some I had to examine through a microscope. Their beauty was marvellous, but more marvellous was their variety. The differences, although the type was preserved, seemed inexhaustible, and all reasons for them broke down.

If a particular modification is an advantage, why is it confined to one species? Why this range of colour? Why these purely fantastic forms? The only word we can say with certainty is that Nature is infinite and tends to infinite expression. *Verum ego me satis clare ostendisse puto, a summa Dei potentia sive infinita natura infinita infinitis modis, hoc est, omnia necessario effluxisse, vel semper eadem necessitate sequi; eodem modo, ac ex natura trianguli ab æterno et in æternum sequitur ejus tres angulos æquari duobus rectis. Quare Dei omnipotentia actu ab æterno fuit et in æternum in eadem actualitate manebit.*

Johnson is religious through and through, but there are passages in the *Rambler* and *Idler* dark as starless, moonless midnight. 'None would have recourse to an invisible power, but that all other subjects have eluded their hopes. . . . That misery does not make all virtuous, experience too certainly informs us; but it is no less certain that of what virtue there is, misery produces far the greatest part.'

There is seldom in life any occasion for

great virtues, and we must not be disappointed if it passes without great passion. We must expect to be related to one another by nothing more than ordinary bonds and satisfied if human beings give us pleasure without excitement.

I have good reason to believe that I am passing on life's journey through what almost all wayfarers therein have had to pass through, but nobody has told me of it.

How wonderful is the withdrawal of heat! It silently departs, the iron grows cold, but the heat spreads and lives!

'Who knows, though he sees the snow-cold blossom shed,
If haply the heart that burned within the rose,
The spirit in sense, the life of life be dead?
If haply the wind that slays with storming snows
Be one with the wind that quickens?'

SWINBURNE, *A Reminiscence.*

With increase of reading we have fallen into a fireside, dilettante culture of ideas as an intellectual pleasure. Amos and Isaiah do not deal in ideas. Their strength lies in love and hatred, in the keenness

and depth of their division between right and wrong. They repeat the work of God the Creator: chaotic sameness becomes diverse; the heavenly firmament mounts on high; there is Light and there is Darkness.

'Glory to thee in the highest, thou confidant of our Creator!' (Landor, *Imaginary Conversations*, Delille and Landor).

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2 *Henry VI.* iii. 3.—The lines beginning with the one which follows are not in the old play and are Shakespeare's own:

'O thou eternal Mover of the heavens,' etc.

Johnson's note is: 'This is one of the scenes which have been applauded by the criticks, and which will continue to be admired when prejudices shall cease, and bigotry give way to impartial examination. These are beauties that rise out of nature and of truth; the superficial reader cannot miss them, the profound can image nothing beyond them.' We talk idly of Johnson's pompous redundance. His sentences are balanced, and it is therefore supposed that the second part repeats the first, but the truth is that each part contains a new

thought. It was his manner to throw successive ideas into this form. Those who are acquainted with his history and his awful mental struggles will find infinite pathos in this restrained comment.

Midsummer Night's Dream.—Shakespeare's overlooking quality, as that of a god surveying human affairs, is shown in this play:

'When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision.'

. . . . . .

'Her dotage now I do begin to pity.'

. . . . . .

'And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.'

. . . . . .

All this night's storm from a drop of magic juice! Oberon has been watching Titania's courtship of Bottom. She sleeps, and he touches her eyes with Dian's bud:

'Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet queen.'

Romeo and Juliet.—The love of Juliet is a thing altogether by itself, not to be classed, never anticipated by any other author, and not imitable. It is sensuous. Look at her

soliloquy, 'Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,' etc., and yet it is woven through and through with immortal threads of fidelity and contempt of death:

> 'O! bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
> From off the battlements of yonder tower.
> . . . . . .
> Or bid me go into a new-made grave.'

How great this girl is! If I were to meet her, how I should be awed! The Juliets I have seen on the stage fail here. They do not bend my knees in that adoration which is inspired by the sea and stars. The love of Romeo for Juliet and of Juliet for Romeo does not stimulate passion, but rather controls it. I never become hot in reading the play. What a solemnity there is in its movement! The lovers are not merely two human beings with no other meaning. The Eternal Powers are at work throughout. Romeo's love for Rosaline is taken over from Brooke's poem. Shakespeare adds the touch that it was not genuine. He makes Friar Laurence say:

> 'O she knew well!
> Thy love did read by rote, and could not spell.'

The love for Rosaline is different altogether from the love for Juliet.

'O heavy lightness! serious vanity!'

is artificial.

Shakespeare also follows Brooke in Juliet's momentary outburst against Romeo when she hears of Tybalt's death, but the contradiction of the echo by the nurse is Shakespeare's own:

'Blister'd be thy tongue
For such a wish! he was not born to shame.'

Apart from the quarrel between the Montagus and Capulets, we feel that the love between Romeo and Juliet could have no other than a tragic end. This world of ours conspires against such passion.

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1 *Henry IV.* v. 4—

'O Harry, thou hast robb'd me of my youth!
I better brook the loss of brittle life
Than those proud titles thou hast won of me;
They wound my thoughts worse than thy sword my flesh:
But thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool;
And time, that takes survey of all the world,
Must have a stop.'

The last three lines are not melancholy philosophising. As such they would be out of place coming from Hotspur. They are

consolation and joy. Death will extinguish for us the memory of certain things suffered and done. That is a gain which is not outweighed by the loss of any pleasure life can give.

Luders' essay three parts of a century ago showed conclusively that Holinshed's and Shakespeare's Prince of Wales, as we see him in the play of *Henry IV.*, wild and dissolute with ignoble companions, is a legend which is disproved by documentary history, but Shakespeare's Prince is nevertheless dramatically true. Johnson says, 'He is great without effort, and brave without tumult. The trifler is roused into a hero, and the hero again reposes in the trifler. The character is great, original, and just.' Johnson's criticism is true. There is no interruption or strain in the passage from one self to the other self: they are both in fact the same self. It is something of a shock that the King should cast off Falstaff, but if a man is appointed to command it is necessary that he should at once take up his proper position. I remember the promotion of a subordinate to a responsible post. His manner changed the next day. He had the courage to ring his bell and give orders to his senior under whom he had been serving.

He became one of the most efficient administrators I ever knew. On the other hand, nearly at the same time another subordinate was promoted who was timid and continued his habits of familiarity with his colleagues. His department fell into disorder and he was dismissed.

As You Like It.—Lady Anne Blunt in her admirable books, *A Pilgrimage to Nejd* and *The Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates*, notices that the true Arab sheykh of the desert, when a traveller seeks his hospitality, asks no questions until food and drink have been offered, and even then is in no hurry. So also the Duke:

> 'Welcome, fall to: I will not trouble you
> As yet, to question you about your fortunes.'

Curiosity about personal matters is ignoble.

Rosalind's love for Orlando is born of pity. 'If I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so: I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.'

It is a proof of Orlando's gentle breeding that he instantly yields to courtesy:

'Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you.'

Orlando says to Jaques: 'I will chide no breather in the world, but myself, against whom I know most faults.' This is characteristic of Shakespeare, and is in the spirit of the Gospels.

The difficulty in this play is not Oliver's sudden love for Celia, although Shakespeare seems to have felt that it was a little too rapid, for Orlando asks Oliver, 'Is't possible that on so little acquaintance you should like her?' It is rather Celia's prompt response which takes us aback. It looks too much like 'any woman to any man.' It may be said in excuse that Celia had heard the piteous story of his conversion, how he had become 'a wretched ragged man o'ergrown with hair,' and what is more to the point, she had heard of Orlando's noble kindness to him. It is odd that Shakespeare does not adopt from Lodge's novel Oliver's rescue of Celia from a band of ruffians. Johnson says, 'To Celia much may be forgiven for the heroism of her friendship.' She forsook not only her father—she had reason not to care much

about him—but she forsook the *court* for Rosalind.

Much Ado about Nothing.—Why should Don Pedro offer to take Claudio's place in the wooing of Hero and why should Claudio consent?

Borachio says, 'Hear me call Margaret, Hero; hear Margaret call me Claudio.'

When Borachio recounts to Conrad what he had done, he makes no mention of his personation of Claudio—'Know, that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero; she leans me out at her mistress's chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night.'

Theobald remarks that if Claudio saw another man with the woman supposed to be Hero and heard her call him Claudio, Claudio would merely suppose that Hero was deceived. Theobald proposes to substitute 'Borachio' for 'Claudio' in the line just quoted. Borachio had just asked Don John to tell Don Pedro and Claudio that Hero loved him, Borachio. But if Theobald's emendation be received, difficulties still remain. Margaret must have been persuaded to answer to the name of Hero.

After Borachio's arrest he tells us that Margaret wore Hero's garments. But Shakespeare, deserting Spenser, from whom this mystification appears to be borrowed, gives no reason which induced Margaret to play this part.

Where was Hero on that night? Borachio promises Don John that 'he will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent.' Claudio asks Hero

> 'What man was he talk'd with you yesternight
> Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?'

She does not reply, as we should think she would, that she was not sleeping in that room, although Benedick asks Beatrice,

> 'Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?'

and Beatrice replies,

> 'No, truly not; although until last night,
> I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.'

Claudio is despicable, and his marriage with Hero is a foul, black spot in the play. Observe that in the first scene he asks Don Pedro,

> 'Hath Leonato any son, my lord?'

and Don Pedro, understanding the drift of the question, replies:

> 'No child but Hero, she's his only heir.'

What a mean, damnable excuse he makes.

> 'Yet sinn'd I not,
> But in mistaking.'

Beatrice with sure eye discerns the scoundrel. 'Kill Claudio.' Not Don Pedro, not even Don John, although she had heard Benedick denounce him as the author of the villainy.

Beatrice and the Friar never doubt Hero's innocence. The Friar declares that

> 'In her eye there hath appear'd a fire
> To burn the errors that these princes hold
> Against her maiden truth.'

What an amplitude there is in Beatrice! What a sweep it is to bring into what we already know of her such divine faith in her friend! This light-hearted girl suddenly becomes sublime.

Hamlet.—Coleridge's remark that the two former appearances of the Ghost increase its objectivity when it appears to Hamlet is subtle and true. Observe that the Ghost is visible to Hamlet, Marcellus, Bernardo and Horatio, but not to the Queen.

There is in Coleridge an activity of intellect which is so fascinating that we do

not stay to inquire whether the result is in accordance with the facts. He says that *tædium vitæ* as in the case of Hamlet is due to 'unchecked appetency of the ideal.' Was the appetency of the ideal strong in Hamlet? The ideal exalts our interest in earthly things.

'Now might I do it pat, now he is praying.' Johnson says that this speech, in which Hamlet contrives damnation for the man he would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered; whereupon Coleridge remarks that Hamlet's postponement of revenge till it should bring damnation to soul as well as body 'was merely the excuse Hamlet made to himself for not taking advantage of this particular and favourable moment for doing justice upon his guilty uncle, at the urgent instance of the spirit of his father.' I doubt if this is a complete explanation. Would it strike the audience as the motive? Men of Hamlet's mould not only speak but feel extravagantly. Incapacity for prompt action is accompanied with more intense emotion than that which is felt by him who acts at once. Hamlet meditates on revenge instead of executing it, and his desire, by brooding, becomes diabolic.

Generalisations like those of Polonius are obtained from observation during youth and middle age. In old age the creation of generalisations ceases and we fall back on our acquired stock. They remain true, but the application fails. We must be increasingly careful in the use of these ancient abstractions, and more intent on the consideration of the instance before us. The temptation to drag it under what we already know is great and must be resisted. Proverbs and wise saws are more suitable to common life than to intricate relationships. They are inapplicable to deep passion and spiritual matters.

Johnson notes that the Ghost's visits are a failure so far as Hamlet's resolution is concerned.

Hamlet says,

> 'O! from this time forth,
> My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!'

but they remained thoughts. The play is to be the thing to decide him, but when it is over and he has the clearest proofs, he does not act, but consents to leave Denmark and returns by accident. Had he obeyed the Ghost's promptings and killed the King at the end of the play in the third

act, Polonius, Ophelia, the Queen, Laertes, and Hamlet himself might have been saved.

Troilus and Cressida is an inexplicable play. It is a justification of those critics who obstinately, but without external evidence, refuse to believe that much which is attributed to Shakespeare really belongs to him. It is absolutely impossible that the man who put these words into the mouth of Achilles:

> 'I have a woman's longing,
> An appetite that I am sick withal,
> To see great Hector in his weeds of peace;
> To talk with him, and to behold his visage,
> Even to my full of view.'

could have adapted from the *Recuyell* the shocking ignominy of the ninth scene in the fifth act in which Achilles calls on his myrmidons to slay Hector unarmed, and then triumphs in these lines:

> 'My half-supp'd sword, that frankly would have fed,
> Pleas'd with this dainty bit, thus goes to bed.
> [*Sheathes his sword.*
> Come, tie his body to my horse's tail;
> Along the field I will the Trojan trail.'

Measure for Measure as a play is hateful to me, although there are passages in it as truly Shakespeare as anything to be found in all his works. The chief objection to it is that justice, to use Coleridge's word, is 'baffled.' There are other objections almost as great. From beginning to end almost everybody is base, foolish, or uninteresting. The Duke's temporary withdrawal is stupid and contemptible, considering that he is the governor of the state; the condemnation of Claudio is wildly unnatural; the substitution of Mariana loathsome; the treachery of Angelo in not reprieving Claudio inconceivable, notwithstanding what we already know of the deputy's hypocrisy and villainy. The lowest depth of scoundrelism is reached when, face to face with Mariana and publicly at the city gate before the Duke and all the company assembled, he excuses himself from marrying her because

> 'her reputation was disvalued
> In levity.'

And yet he is let off scot-free, and Mariana marries him! Isabella's apology,

> 'I partly think,
> A due sincerity govern'd his deeds,
> Till he did look on me,'

might be sufficient for an outbreak of his lust but not for his lying, and Mariana's is still worse :

> 'Best men are moulded out of faults.'

Not out of such faults as Angelo's are the best men moulded.

The punishment inflicted on the poor wretch Lucio is horrible.

> *Lucio.* 'I beseech your highness, do not marry me to a whore! . . . Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death, whipping and hanging.
> *Duke.* Slandering a prince deserves it.'

This is a foul line. I should like to discover documentary proof that it is not Shakespeare's, but the gag of some actor desirous of pleasing court folk!

The *Promos and Cassandra* from which *Measure for Measure* is taken is certainly worse, for Promos (Angelo) is made to marry Cassandra (Isabella) and after the marriage is to die, but Cassandra, 'tyed in the greatest bondes of affection to her husband, becomes an earnest suter for his life.'

Henry VIII. — The scene in which Katherine appears before the court is

perhaps the finest in the play. To what noble use is her Spanish pride turned! The last line of the following quotation from Katherine's reply to Wolsey is infinite:

> 'For it is you
> Have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me,
> Which God's dew quench.'

Othello is pure tragedy, for the judgment which falls on Othello and Desdemona, although it is disproportionate to the character or life of either, is necessary from the beginning. Brabantio was not wholly without justification in thinking the marriage unnatural, and Desdemona's desertion of him without a word was unfeeling. The depth of the tragedy is increased by his death.

> 'Poor Desdemon! I am glad thy father's dead.
> Thy match was mortal to him.'

Iago feels the necessity of obtaining motives for his conduct. He tries to find them in the supposed infidelity of his wife with Othello and in his supersession by Cassio. Neither is sufficient, but he partly believes in them, and they partly serve their purpose.

Coleridge says Othello was not jealous:

he lacked the suspicion that is essential to jealousy. Perhaps so, but in that case we want a name for the passion which rushes to belief of that which it prays may be false. The very intensity of love, so far from inducing careful examination of slander against the divinity I worship, prevents reflection by anxiety; by terror lest the love should be disturbed. Iago's evidence, thinks Coleridge, was so strong that Othello could not have done otherwise; but would he have acted in war on evidence equally weak?

How mad Iago is with all his cunning! What a fool! Had he been anything but the maddest fool, he would have seen that in the end his plans must break down. Intellect? Yes, of a kind he had it pre-eminently, but intellect becomes folly when it is inhuman.

'Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars.'

Shakespeare might have made Othello the more eager to plunge into the big wars, but Desdemona is so inwoven with him that the whole fabric goes to ruin when she is torn out.

Othello 'falls in a trance' after his outburst at the beginning of the fourth act.

He is a Moor. In the background also lies Brabantio's prophecy. Venice cannot do without him, but he cannot hold a Venetian woman.

King Lear.—There are passages in *King Lear* which are enough to make us wish we had never been born. They are almost an impeachment of the Ruler of the Universe, and yet—there is Cordelia. Whence did she come? She is as much His handiwork as Regan, and in all our conclusions about Him we must take her into account.

Lear does not go mad. He is mad from the beginning, but his madness is in abeyance. Look at the style of his curses on Goneril.

Coleridge's criticism is exact: 'Lear's self-supportless leaning for all pleasure on another's breast.' If a man desires not to go mad or not to be soured into oil of vitriol, let him watch the doors of his heart; let him never solicit any expression of love.

Cordelia's 'nothing, my lord,' as Coleridge says, is partly irrepressible disgust at her sisters' hypocrisy. There was also, as France admits, 'a tardiness in nature' in Cordelia. She was her father's favourite, but what sort of a life must she have lived

with such a father before the time at which the play opens? We ought not to be surprised that she refuses to be demonstrative. She reacts against his exaggeration.

I cannot read the blinding of Gloucester. The only excuse that can be offered, not good for much, is that Shakespeare found the story in the *Arcadia*, and that in his day horrors on the stage were not so repulsive as they are to us. Cordelia's death taken from Holinshed is almost as bad. It is not involved in the tragedy like the death of Ophelia or of Desdemona.

All's Well that Ends Well.—Johnson comments, 'I cannot reconcile my heart to Bertram; a man noble without generosity, and young without truth; who married Helena as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate: when she is dead by his unkindness, sneaks home to a second marriage, is accused by a woman whom he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness.' This is just. Bertram is atrocious. With Helena before him he says,

> 'If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,
> I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly.'

Did he require a deposition on oath in

presence of a magistrate? He deserved a scourging in the market place.

Coleridge calls Helena one of Shakespeare's loveliest women. I cannot agree. She secures her husband's embraces under a false pretence. How a woman could consent to lie in the arms of a man who had cast her off, and who believed when he was enjoying her that she was a mistress whom he preferred is beyond my comprehension. It is so in Boccaccio, but that is no excuse. Devotion to a man who is indifferent or who hates, is tragically possible, but in its greatest intensity would hardly permit such humiliation.

The play is bad altogether. What was the necessity for suggesting Bertram's second marriage? There is nowhere any trace of Shakespeare's depth. The difficulties of the text are singular, and seem to mark this drama as one different from the rest.

Macbeth. — Johnson's remark that the events are so great that they overpower the persons and prevent nice discrimination of character is partly true.

Coleridge notices that Lady Macbeth was a person of high rank, living much alone.

A darkly meditative mind left in solitude can conceive without being startled the most awful designs. The same imagination in Lady Macbeth which brooded over the plot against Duncan's life drove her to delirium and suicide.

Shakespeare transfers the most perilous stuff in him to Macbeth. The function smothered in surmise; the reflection on the emptiness of life—tale told by an idiot—Shakespeare empties it into this murderous traitor. He makes him the *prey* of that which is mixed in the composition of the best.

The witches do not strike us as miraculous. They are not supernatural, but extensions of the natural.

It is an apology for emendation that one of the most celebrated passages in the play is based on conjecture (confirmed by what follows) and on analogy.

> 'I dare do all that may become a man;
> Who dares *no* [Folio] more is none.'

'No'—corrected by Rowe to 'do.'
In *Measure for Measure* we have

> 'Be that you are,
> That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none.'

Note the terrible, gasping brevity of the

dialogue between Lady Macbeth and her husband after the murder:

Lady M. 'Did not you speak?
M. When?
Lady M. Now.
M. As I descended?
Lady M. Ay.'

Macbeth's speech beginning just before he hears of Lady Macbeth's death, and ending after he hears of it, should be interpreted and spoken as follows. He had just said he 'will laugh a siege to scorn.' Then a cry of women within.

'What is that noise?
Seyton. It is the cry of women, my good lord.
[*Exit.*
Macbeth (musing). I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in 't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Re-enter Seyton.

Wherefore was that cry?
Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead.
Macbeth (with a touch of impatience). She should have died hereafter:
There would have been a time for such a word.'

He makes no inquiry about his wife, but goes on with his reverie, which does not specially refer to her.

> 'To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time,
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.'

The '*petty* pace,' coming from Macbeth! The 'out, out, brief candle,' should be spoken in the same musing tone.

Johnson says of a learned apology by Heath for a line in *Macbeth* which is defective in metre: 'This is one of the effects of literature in minds not naturally perspicacious'—a criticism which might be extended to much Shakespearean comment.

Cymbeline.—The wager is loathsome. If any man with whom we were acquainted had laid it, should we not scorn and brand him? It was a crime to mention Imogen's name in such society as that which met

at Philario's house. The only excuse is Boccaccio, but what shall we say of Iachimo's interview with Imogen, invented by Shakespeare! After his beastly experiment upon her, he excuses himself:

> 'I have spoke this, to know if your affiance
> Were deeply rooted.'

She begs him to prolong his visit! The apology is worse than the original insult.

The royal behaviour, or what Shakespeare means us to take for royal behaviour, in the two youths is overdone and sometimes repulsive.

Arviragus goes out of his way to put his love for Imogen higher than that for his supposed father, Belarius, who is present.

> 'The bier at door,
> And a demand who is't shall die, I'd say
> My father, not this youth.'

Yet the point of the scene is the nobility of blood in these youths!

Lucius, who had protected Imogen, hopes she will plead for his life, and she turns on him:

> 'No, no; alack!
> There's other work in hand: I see a thing
> Bitter to me as death: your life, good master,
> Must shuffle for itself.'

In the fifth act Posthumus believes his wife to be guilty, and yet breaks out into strains like these:

> 'So I 'll die,
> For thee, O Imogen! even for whom my life
> Is every breath a death.
> . . . . . .
> For Imogen's dear life take mine; and though
> 'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life; you coin'd it.'

Shakespeare surely ought to have made Posthumus revert to perfect faith. He ought to have borrowed something from his own Beatrice. Posthumus wishes Imogen saved, because, if her life had been spared, she might have repented.

Iachimo is impossible, simple blackness, worse than Iago. He is unactable, for some motivation is necessary.

Shakespeare's genius is so immense that it overpowers us, and we must be on our guard lest it should twist our instinct for what is true and right. The errors of a fool are not dangerous, but those of a Shakespeare, Goethe, or Byron it is almost impossible to resist.

Twelfth Night.—The play is two plays in one without much connection. The Viola play is improbable. Why did Shakespeare

omit that part of the story which tells us that Silla (Viola) had seen the Duke when he was shipwrecked on Cyprus where she lived, and had fallen in love with him? In the play, hearing of the Duke, she discloses a design to make her 'own occasion mellow.'

Malvolio shut up as mad—

Clown. 'What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild-fowl?

Malvolio. That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.

Clown. What thinkest thou of his opinion?

Malvolio. I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion.'

Malvolio was a gentleman, but he was more. Shakespeare may go a little too far with the yellow stockings and cross-gartering, but the liability to deception by a supposed profession of love is a divine weakness, not inconsistent with true nobility of intellect and with sagacity. There is no reason to suppose he was often deceived in worldly matters. Maria is a bad sort of clever barmaid, and was not unwilling to marry the drunken Sir Toby. When I last saw *Twelfth Night* acted, the whole of the latter part of the fifth act was omitted, for the purpose, apparently, of strengthening

the representation of Malvolio as a comic fool whose silly brain is turned by conceit. It was shocking, but the manager knew his audience.

Julius Cæsar.—Casca is indignant that Cæsar should be offered the crown, but he despises the applause of the mob when Cæsar rejected it. 'The rabblement hooted and clapped their chopped hands and threw up their sweaty night-caps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Cæsar refused the crown that it had almost choked Cæsar; for he swounded and fell down at it; and for mine own part, I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air.'

Brutus. 'Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
The Genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.'

I cannot think Dr. Johnson, Mason, and Delius are right in supposing the Genius to be the power which watches over us for our protection, and that the mortal instruments are the passions which rebel against it, and,

as Johnson says, 'excite him to a deed of honour and danger.' The Genius and the mortal instruments are in council. The Genius is the president and the mortal instruments are subordinates. The insurrection is their resistance because they cannot at once be brought to do what the Genius directs. There is no hint in what goes before of 'safety.' The mortal instruments suggest

> 'I know no personal cause to spurn at him.'

Blakeway agrees with this interpretation.

In both Plutarch and Shakespeare, Brutus refuses to kill Antony. Brutus will go no further than justice demands. But this is not enough for success. Hence the ruin of the republican cause.

Steevens says that the apparition at Sardis 'could not be at once the shade of Cæsar and the evil genius of Brutus.' But Shakespeare intended that it should be both. Brutus in the fifth scene of the fifth act thus replies to Volumnius:

> 'The ghost of Cæsar hath appear'd to me
> Two several times by night: at Sardis, once;
> And, this last night, here in Philippi's fields.'

It is an instance of Steevens' prosaic temper

that he could not see the fitness of the combination.

Brutus. And whether we shall meet again I know not.
Therefore our everlasting farewell take ;
For ever, and for ever, farewell, Cassius !
If we do meet again, why, we shall smile ;
If not, why then, this parting was well made.

Cassius. For ever, and for ever, farewell, Brutus !
If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed ;
If not, 'tis true, this parting was well made.

These verses are perhaps the noblest in our language. Nothing ever has gone or could go beyond them. Shakespeare here justifies the claim on his behalf to be placed alone and unreachable. Observe the repetition by Cassius almost word for word. Swift must have had this passage in his mind when in a letter to Pope, which I quote from memory, as I cannot lay my hand on it, he tells Pope that he will come over to England and see him if possible, but, if not, 'we must part, as all human creatures have parted.'

'Why, then, lead on. O ! that a man might know
The end of this day's business ere it come !
But it sufficeth that the day will end,
And then the end is known. Come, ho ! away !'

These lines might easily be turned into

commonplace, but what could be more pathetic or solemn?

The true drama of Julius Cæsar is indicated by Plutarch. It is Cæsar's triumph over innumerable difficulties, any one of which might have been fatal, the protection by his genius, the limitation of its power, the Dictatorship—'Semideus,' his death. Shakespeare gives no reason, nor does Plutarch, why Brutus should have plotted to kill Cæsar, excepting the fear of what might happen if he were to become absolute. Brutus is abstract.

'Such one he was (of him we boldly say),
In whose rich soule all sovereigne powres did sute,
In whom in peace the elements all lay
So mixt, as none could soveraigntie impute;
As all did govern, yet all did obey;
His lively temper was so absolute,
That 't seem'd, when heaven his modell first began,
In him it show'd perfection in a man.'

This is Drayton's imitation of what Antony says of Brutus, and it is one which not only does not spoil the original, but is itself original.

Antony and Cleopatra.—It is not Antony's passion for Cleopatra which ruins him. He has not the cohesion which obtains success. He is loose-bonded. Cæsar is his complete

foil and contrast. Cæsar exists dramatically to explain Antony. Antony's challenge to single combat and the speeches he makes to his servants are characteristic. The marriage to Octavia, more than his Egyptian slavery, shows his weakness. There is a line in Plutarch which I wish Shakespeare had used. 'But it was in the nature of Antonius to show his best qualities in difficulties, and in his misfortune he was as like as may be to a good man.'

Scenes 6 and 7, Act ii., the interview with Pompey, are in Plutarch, but it is not evident why they are in the drama. They do not advance the action. Shakespeare preserves also Antony's message to Octavius that if he was dissatisfied with the treatment of Thyreus he might hang or torture Antony's freedman Hipparchus—a detestable piece of brutality which might well have been omitted.

Cleopatra is quite apart from Shakespeare's other women. She is a most complicated and difficult study. Shakespeare takes over from Plutarch her wandering disguised through the streets at night with Antony; the voyage down the Cydnus; the hanging of the salt fish on Antony's hook; the flight at Actium; the fact that she was mistress

of Julius Cæsar and Cnæus Pompey; the second betrayal of the fleet; her petition to Octavius for her son; and her attempt to cheat Octavius in the account of her treasures. In addition Shakespeare makes her 'hop forty paces through the public street.' What could have induced him to invent this story? She threatens Charmian with bloody teeth; lets Thyreus kiss her hand, arousing thereby Antony's rage. Thyreus tells her that Cæsar knows she did not embrace Antony from love but from fear, and she replies:

> 'He is a god, and knows
> What is most right: mine honour was not yielded,
> But conquer'd merely.'

This may be mockery, but after she has let Thyreus kiss her she goes on:

> 'Your Cæsar's father oft,
> When he hath mus'd of taking kingdoms in,
> Bestow'd his lips on that unworthy place,
> As it rain'd kisses.'

She reminds herself of this, fresh from Antony, who had just told her of Octavius's offer to protect her if she would give up the 'grizled head' of her lover.

After Antony's death she finds

> 'nothing left remarkable
> Beneath the visiting moon.'

She tells Proculeius before he surprises her that she would gladly look Cæsar in the face, but she tries to stab herself, for,

> 'Know, sir, that I
> Will not wait pinion'd at your master's court;
> Nor once be chastis'd with the sober eye
> Of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up
> And show me to the shouting varletry
> Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
> Be gentle grave unto me! rather on Nilus' mud
> Lay me stark naked, and let the water-flies
> Blow me into abhorring! rather make
> My country's high pyramides my gibbet,
> And hang me up in chains!'

She asks Dolabella what Cæsar means to do with her, and when she learns that she is to be taken to Rome she recurs to the horror of the triumph.

> 'Now, Iras, what think'st thou?
> Thou, an Egyptian puppet, shalt be shown
> In Rome, as well as I: mechanick slaves
> With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers, shall
> Uplift us to the view; in their thick breaths,
> Rank of gross diet, shall we be enclouded,
> And forced to drink their vapour.
>
> *Iras.* The gods forbid!
>
> *Cleopatra.* Nay, 'tis most certain, Iras: saucy lictors
> Will catch at us, like strumpets; and scald rhymers

> Ballad us out o' tune ; the quick comedians,
> Extemporally will stage us, and present
> Our Alexandrian revels ; Antony
> Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
> Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
> I' the posture of a whore.'

This was a motive for death, but it was not all. She reproves herself because she let Iras die first, because Antony will

> 'make demand of her, and spend that kiss
> Which is my heaven to have' ;

and Antony is her last word.

Charmian declares her to be 'a lass unparallel'd,' of 'royal eyes.'

It is impossible to shut this woman up within the limits of what we call a character, but why should we attempt it? Why cannot we be content with what we have before us? Shakespeare never defined his people to himself. In Cleopatra we have a new combination of the simple, eternal elements, a combination subtle, and beyond analysis. What celestial lights begin to play over this passion as the drama goes on!

Coriolanus.—We cannot help being sorry that Shakespeare should have gone out of his way to select such a subject. It leaves a

disagreeable taste in the mouth. The aristocrat is overdone. No true aristocrat would talk such rant as Coriolanus talks in Act i. Sc. 1. Shakespeare omits Plutarch's account of the oppression of the plebeians, or only slightly alludes to it. Volumnia's contempt for the people is worse than that of Coriolanus. To her they are not human, and she does not consider that common truthfulness is binding in her intercourse with them.

> 'It lies you on to speak
> To the people, not by your own instruction,
> Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you,
> But with such words that are but rooted in
> Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables
> Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.'

Reading such passages as these we understand Whitman when he says that although Shakespeare is 'of astral genius,' he is 'entirely fit for feudalism . . . is incarnated, uncompromising feudalism,' and contains much which is 'ever offensive to democracy.'

Winter's Tale.—Coleridge is perhaps super-subtle in his discrimination between the jealousy of Leontes and that of Othello, which Coleridge will not call jealousy. But the difference is not greater than that between

the two men. The passion of Leontes is roused simply by Hermione's giving her hand to Polixenes. This common courtesy is 'paddling palms.' There is something contemptible in his transports: not so in the case of Othello. Leontes cursing Hermione in the presence of his lords is unendurable.

Leontes in his passion disbelieves the oracle.

> 'There is no truth at all i' the oracle:
> The sessions shall proceed: this is mere falsehood.'

But he is reversed, suddenly, completely, when he is told his son is dead.

> 'Apollo's angry; and the heavens themselves
> Do strike at my injustice.'

Perdita is brought up by a shepherd and talks like a well-educated patrician's daughter. 'O Proserpina,' etc. Polixenes says to Camillo:

> 'This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever
> Ran on the green-sward: nothing she does or seems
> But smacks of something greater than herself,
> Too noble for this place.'

Here again the emphasis on descent is exaggerated and we resent it.

Leontes after the statue is unveiled—

'But yet, Paulina,
Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing
So aged as this seems.'

Who can read this without choking? Like Exeter in *Henry V.*:

'I had not so much of man in me,
And all my mother came into mine eyes,
And gave me up to tears.'

Could I have continued to live when that music sounded and she descended? I think not. I should have sought pardon and death.

'Now, in age,
Is she become the suitor?'

Who can—I will not say express, but dream a tenderness deeper than that? Sixteen years she had waited, and then she embraces him! It is difficult to divine Shakespeare, the man, in his plays and poems, but in this passage and one or two others resembling it he seems to be revealed.

Pericles.—The last act of Pericles, and especially the first scene, is Shakespeare at his highest.

'O Helicanus, strike me, honour'd sir;
Give me a gash, put me to present pain;

Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me,
O'erbear the shores of my mortality,
And drown me with their sweetness.'

What can equal in purifying, regenerative power the fact that one human being can be so much to another? No theology, morality, or philosophy can bring a man so near to God.

Tempest.—Prospero's pardon for those who had conspired against him proceeds from 'our little life is rounded with a sleep.'

The *Tempest* is called a comedy, but it suggests a tragedy in Prospero's return to Milan and the months or years he spent there till he died. For twelve years he had been on the island with Miranda, 'a thrid of his own life,' 'that for which he lived,' 'the cherubin that did preserve him' during his voyage, who raised in him

'An undergoing stomach, to bear up
Against what should ensue.'

He hears her, smitten with Ferdinand almost in a moment, declare to him:

'I would not wish
Any companion in the world but you,
Nor can imagination form a shape,
Besides yourself, to like of';

and she leaves her father and goes far away to Naples with her husband.

Ariel, whom Prospero had freed from his miserable enchantment, had never ceased to thirst for liberty and returns to the winds. Dearly had Prospero loved his delicate Ariel.

> 'Why, that 's my dainty Ariel! I shall miss thee;
> But yet thou shalt have freedom: so, so, so.'

Caliban he had tried to reclaim, had taught him speech and to name the big and lesser light, but all his pains were 'lost, quite lost,' and the 'born devil' rewarded them by an attempt on Miranda's chastity. He is left behind, master of the island again, to take up his abode in the cell which Prospero and Miranda had inhabited, and with the added experience of Stephano's drink, which he probably soon learned to imitate.

Antonio, the usurping brother, is said to have been penitent, but his penitence was not profound. He offered no apology, and the first words he is recorded to have uttered after his guilt was discovered were a joke upon 'the plain fish,' Caliban. He was forgiven, and most likely once more became malignant.

There is nothing to show us that the citizens of Milan were in much trouble when

Prospero was deposed, or that they rejoiced when he was restored. They, doubtless, regretted Antonio, who

> 'Set all hearts i' the state
> To what tune pleased his ear.'

The lord of the spirits, of the elves who chased the ebbing Neptune, he who had given fire to the dread rattling thunder, broke his staff and drowned his book and went back to his lonely palace. Did he never long for his island, for Ariel's music, for his daughter's daily presence, replaced by infrequent letters with news of the Court, her children, and Ferdinand? He may have reflected that she was happy, but nevertheless every third thought was his grave.

Merchant of Venice.—Jessica is hateful from the beginning; the disguise in boy's clothes, the robbery of her father, and the exchange for a monkey of the jewel which belonged to her mother. I am afraid Shakespeare intended we should like her. But she is only a part of the perplexity of the play. That Shakespeare should have used the casket story is inexplicable. Not only is it, as Johnson says, 'wildly improb-

able,' it confuses Portia's character: it is an irritating absurdity.

> 'But more, for that in low simplicity
> He lends out money gratis.'

We have no proof that Antonio did this. He may have done it. He was the kind of person who might like popularity. If he was really guilty of 'low simplicity,' I sympathise with Shylock's hatred of him. But if he was not, I understand it. Shylock was not bound to be generous. It would have been ridiculous in him, an alien in blood and religion, persecuted, spat upon.

The interest of the play departs with Shylock.

Shakespeare's plays are organic, one character cannot be understood without the other; Hamlet without Ophelia; Romeo without Juliet. Each is in, by, and of the other; particularised by the other. I do not find this quality, at least in anything like the same degree, in Beaumont and Fletcher.

Note the way in which Shakespeare's characters—Macbeth, for example—unfold themselves by new circumstances, what unconjecturable development takes place.

When a serious defect presents itself in a living friend it seems to obtrude itself, press upon us, and affect our judgment more than if we see it in a play of Shakespeare's. In the play the background of counterbalancing virtue is not obscured and forgotten. In actual life we lose sight of it.

FINIS

'He that considers how little he dwells upon the condition of others will learn how little the attention of others is attracted by himself. While we see multitudes passing before us, of whom perhaps not one appears to deserve our notice, or excite our sympathy, we should remember that we likewise are lost in the same throng; that the eye which happens to glance upon us is turned in a moment on him that follows us, and that the utmost which we can reasonably hope or fear, is to fill a vacant hour with prattle, and be forgotten.'—*The Rambler*, No 159.

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